ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF HINDUISM



VOLUME 5

SUNIL SEHGAL

This multivolume Encyclopaedia is a pioneering attempt to bring together all aspects of Hinduism and contains so many multifarious things to afford us an insight into the deepest depths of the soul of Hinduism. This encyclopaedia is essentially a compilation of the terms and concepts covering various aspects of Hinduism. Many words borrowed for more general usage have been endowed with very special meaning. This encyclopaedia has been compiled, edited and arranged in alphabetical order by a keen scholar of Hinduism. In this encyclopaedia, Hinduism as a religion has been distinguished from Hinduism as a social organisation. On the one hand Hinduism regards god as a super fluity while on the other hand it sponsors a deeply emotional theism as the noblest form of religion. In this encyclopaedia, the entries have been represented in a clear and explanatory style to provide both straight forward definitions and invaluable background information. This encyclopaedia includes material from various Indian and foreign sources which has been compiled and edited by the author to make the set interesting.

This encyclopaedia is for the benefits of students, teachers, and research scholars as well as laymen who wish to know the key aspects of Hinduism as a religion as well as also a social organisation.

Rs. 3500 (Set of 5 Vols.)

Encyclopaedia of Hinduism

Encyclopaedia of Hinduism

Volume-5

(T—Z)

Sunil Sehgal

Sarup & Sons
New Delhi

Published by:

Sarup & Sons

4740/23, Ansari Road,
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002
Ph: 3281029

Encyclopaedia of Hinduism (5 Vols.)

Ist Edition 1999

ISBN : 81-7625-064-3

Printed in India

Published by Prabhat Kumar Sharma for Sarup & Sons. Laser Typesetting at Anna Computers, Delhi and Printed at **Roshan** Offset Press, Delhi-110053.

Preface

This multivolume Encyclopaedia is a pioneering attempt to bring together all aspects of Hinduism and contains so many multi farious things to afford us an insight into the deepest depths of the soul of Hinduism. This encyclopaedia is essentially a compilation of the terms and concepts covering various aspects of Hinduism. Many words borrowed for more general usage have been endowed with very special meaning. This encyclopaedia has been compiled, edited and arranged in alphabetical order by a keen scholar of Hinduism. In this encyclopaedia, Hinduism as a religion has been distinguished from Hinduism as a social organisation. On the one hand Hinduism regards god as a superfluity while on the other hand it sponsors a deeply emotional theism as the noblest form of religion. In this encyclopaedia, the entries have been represented in a clear and explanatory style to provide both straight forward definitions and invaluable background information. This encyclopaedia includes material from various Indian and foreign sources which has been compiled and edited by the author to make the set interesting.

This encyclopaedia is for the benefits of students, teachers, and research scholars as well as laymen who wish to know the key aspects of Hinduism as a religion as well as also a social organisation.

T

Taditakara (*lightning*)

Goddess of light. Buddhist. Colour: green. Attributes: lightning in the form of a creeper. Also Vidyddhara.

Takkiraja

God. Buddhist. A *dikpala* or guardian of the south-eastern quarter. Colour: blue. Attributes: blue staff, jewel, lotus staff, sword and trident. Also Vajrajvalanalarka and Vajrayaksa.

Taksaka

Snake god. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). One of a group of seven *mahanagas*. Attributes: rosary, swastika and water-jar.

Tantras, Chakras & Kundalini Power

The Tantras are a branch of Hinduism. Most. Tantra literature is still kept a secret and the real meaning of much that is known is still an enigma. Most Hindu, including great scholars, generally do not discuss Tantra.

The Sanskrit word Tantra means "to expand". Unlike the rest of Hinduism, a part of Tantra believes in the enjoyment of material life. No one knows exactly when Tantrism started or the saints who started it. Evidence shows that Tantrism existed during the Vedic age, Even Sankara mentions its existence in his book *Saundarya Lahari*. There are about 108 books on Tantras. *Tantrism* and Shakhism are almost one and the same. In Tantrism, the deity is Siva-Shakti, a combination of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati. It is a system of practices used for spiritual upliftment. The best part

of Tantrism is its knowledge about the vast untapped energy in the human body. This power is known as Kundalini power or Serpent power. *Tantrism also researched into alchemy (chemistry), astrology, astronomy, palmistry. cosmology and even in atomic theory.* Manras are the gift of Tantras to Hinduism and the world. Yantras, the geometrical figures and sketches associated with Mantras, are also equally important gifts of Tantrism to humanity.

As per Tantras, the three important nerves Sushmna, Ida and Pingala start from Muladhara Chakra, the base of spinal column. Sushumna is the most important of all nerves or Nadis and is invisible and subtle. It runs through the central channel of the spinal column and extends to the topmost point of the head. Ida and Pingala run parallel to Sushumna on the left and right side of the spinal column respectively. Ida and Pingala nerves or Nadis meet Sushumna at Ajna Chakra, the point situated between the eyebrows. They then separate again and flow through the left and right nostrils respectively.

Along Sushumna, there are seven psychic centres starting with *Muladhara Chakra.* They cannot be seen with naked eyes. They are believed to look like lotus flowers with different colours and each controls a sense organ's activity.

Muladishthana Chakra-base of spine — 4 petals — controls Smell

Svadishthana Chakra — base of genitals—petals -Taste

Manipura Chakra—oppoite to navel — 10 petals -Sight

Anahata Chakra—at the level of heart—12 petals—Touch

Visuddha Chakra—at medulla oblongata—16 petals-Hearing

Ajna Chakra—between eyebrows—2 petals—controls Mind

Sahasrara—located above the topmost point of head has 1,000 petals — Yogi attains cosmic consciousness.

SON : What is Kundalini Power?

DADDY: According to Tantric literature, there is a very mysterious and powerful force in the human body called Kundalini Power or

Serpent Power. It is lying like a Serpent in a coiled or inactive form at the base of the spine called Muladhara Chakra. (The three important nerves of the human body, Sushumna, Ida and Pingala also originate from the same point.) As per Tantras, since this mighty force remains dormant throughout one's life-time, most people are unaware of its existence. It is believed that as a person evolves spiritually by meditation or Pranayama exercises, this power slowly rises up through the Sushumna nerve. This rise of Kundalini power is known as Awakening of Kundalini.

This power rises slowly and steadily and does not shoot up in a straight line. When it passes through each psychic centre, the person will have complete contol of one of the sense-organs. For example, if it reaches *Manipura Chakra* opposite to the navel, the person will have complete control of sight. No Samadhi (Sam=with; Adhi=Lord- Union with God) is possible without the awakening of this power. It is said, the Kundalini power passes along the six chakras and eventually gets united with Sahasrara at the crown of the head. When that happens the person attains cosmic consciousness, the highest form of realization.

Unhappily Tantras also deal with black magic and sexo-yogic exercises between male and female devotees. As per Tantrism such an act will help both devotees to explore their senses rather than be subdued by them and actually make use of their sexual energy for spiritual uplifit. The woman devotee who takes part in these erotic exercises is considered as Shakti (Mother Goddess). Apart from what I have discussed above, in a particular kind of Tantric practice, devotees follow the Five M's. They are Madya (wine) , Mamsa (meât), Matsya (fish), Mudra (Parched rice) and Maithuna (sexual union). During the performance of certain Tantric rituals, devotees even resort to the use of drugs and chemicals.

All these practices are against the basic fundamentals of Hinduism. Now, you know exactly the reason why many Hindu scholars do not want to discuss Tantras. At the same time, anyone will wonder why a scripture which gave us the knowledge of Kundalini power

in the body, Mantras and Yantras resorts to wine and sex.

Tara (*power of hunger*)

1. Goddess, Hindu (Vedic, Epic and Puranic). May originally have had astral connotations, since the word can be interpreted as 'star'. One of a group of *mahavidyas* personifying the Sakti of Siva. She may also be the consort of Candra (Soma). Aspects include Krodharatri. Attributes: knife, skin, skull, snakes and sword. Three-eyed.

2. Goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana and Vajrayana). An epithet of the mother of the Buddha, Maya. Also one of a series of female deities, the *dhyanibuddhasakti* considered to be aspects of the Sakti of Avalokitesvara or a Amogashiddhi. She may also be the Sakti of Adibiddha and of the various *dhyanibuddhas*, in which case she is characterized by their colours. These Taras thus become "White Tara' and so on. See also Bhrkuti, Ekajata, Kurukulla, Sitatara and Syamatara. In Tibetan Buddhism she is known as sGrol-ma.

Tathatavasita (*control of the such-ness*)

Minor goddess. Buddhist. One of a group of *vasitas* personifying the disciplines of spiritual regeneration. Colour: white. Attribute: white lotus,

Tejosnisa (*sharp*)

God. Buddhist. Apparently connected with the guardian deities or *dikpalas* in the south-eastern quarter. Colour: whitish red. Attribute: sun disc.

Thirukural-Holy Bible of Saivaites

It is indeed a great Hindu scripture but it is unknown to Hindus in general since this scripture, unlike others, is written in Tamil language. It is indeed a part of Dravidian civilization of South India. *Thirukural* can be considered as the Holy Bible of *Saivaites* (people who worship Lord Siva -the Lord of Annihilation) and it was written by weaver named Thiruvalluvar during the first century B.C. In Tamil language, Tiru means Holy and Kural means voice. This scripture consists of short couplets. In fact the entire scripture consists of 133 chapters and each chapter consists of 10 couplets.

So totally there are 1330 couplets in this sacred literature. Even though *Thirukural* is considered to be the Holy Bible of Saivaites, the scripture itself is universal in nature. It teaches a man the values of life. In a way it is an enlarged version of *Ten Commandments.* Almost all who come across with this scripture will fall in love with it, due to its simplicity and universality of expression of facts. Followers of Jainism love to read this, because this scripture exemplifies the ideals of Ahimsa or non-violence. The Christians of South India like to read it, since many things written in this scripture are similar to the *Sermon* on the Mount. The late *Dr. Albert Schweitzer* called it: One of the *grandest achievements of the human mind.* I hope you will definitely read this lovable scripture.

Tiksnosnisa (*hot and sharp*)

God. Buddhist. Apparently connected with the guardian deities or *dikpalas* in the north-western quarter. Colour: sky green (possibly meaning overcast'). Attributes: book and sword.

Tirumal (*the excellent black one*)

Creator god. Early Dravidian (Tamil). Thought to reside in trees and equating with Vishnu. In later Hinduism used as an epithet of Vishnu.

Trailokyavijaya (*lord of three worlds*)

God. Buddhist (Mahayana). Seen standing on the Hindu deities Mahesvara (Siva) and Gauri. Colour: blue. Attributes: arrow, bell, bow, club, hook, noose, prayer wheel, staff and sword. Also an alternative name for Acala.

Transcendental Meditation (TM)

TM was started by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi in 1956. It is essentially the Mantra Yoga which Maharshi revived and introduced to the world. TM promised a drugless, stressless state of mind with inner peace and knowledge. Many of TM's meditation techniques are guarded secrets. The procedure is very simple and straightforward. First go and meet the Maharshi or one of his selected instructors. The instructor (teacher) will ask you questions about your health,

feelings, education, and marital status. After listening to your answers, the teacher will advise you to chant a special Mantra. As you may know, there are several Mantras, so you may be given a particular Mantra that will help you the most. After receiving the Mantra, you must mentally chant the Mantra for 20 minutes each morning and evening. As a result, your stress problems will vanish and you will be a better person according to the Maharshi. TM definitely has a lot of positive aspects. TM also received a lot of negative publicity.

Its 'secrecy', and special attraction to it for celebrities make it look like a phony 'Celebrity Religion'. But as per the Maharshi, "TM is not a religion, but a science." Whatever the critics may say, TM has saved many lives from spiritual decline.

I do not think even advocates of TM make such a claim. Maharshi Mahesh Yogi indeed revolutionised the whole concept of meditation. He made it very simple and lovable by all. He indeed took meditation out of all religious dogmas and presented it to the world on a silver platter but at the same time nobody can say that TM is the only right method of meditation. *If that was the only method, Lord Krishna would not have resorted to 18 chapters and 700 verses of advice to Arjuna (his disciple) explaining different methods of meditation and paths of God-realization.* TM will suit some but for some it may not suit at all. For some, very rigid, ritualistic and highly ascetic Hare Krishna methods may suit well. For some Mr. J. Krishnamurti's intellectual methods of seeking truth may be the answer. Please also understand that some of the claims of TM have been questioned by many including Prabhaupada (of Hare Krishan movement), J. Krishnamurti, etc. Mr. J. Krishnamurti has gone to the extent of saying that repetition of "Om" or even "Coca Cola" will have the same effect on the mind. Anyway my idea is not to belittle the great gift of Maharshi to the world. I just want to tell you that there are so many ways of right meditation.

Trayastrinsa (*the thirty-three*)

Collective name for the group of *deva* gods. Hindu (Vedic). One of the many lists of deities in Hinduism, this one is contained in the

Rg Veda and includes thirty- three names divided into three groups of eleven in each of the three worlds. Subsequently, the devas were separated into eight vasus, twelve adityas, eleven rudras and two asvins. In later Hinduism the number thirty-three is increased hyperbolically to 330 million and deva refers to gods excluding the major triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Tribal and Folk Dances

Folk-art has sprung out of the creative urge of the people, ethnic groups, races and tribes that are uneducated and unlettered or little educated and outside the pale of urban, cultured and civilized living. They lack refinement and artificiality. Thus, folk dance is a term which covers various dance-forms originated, developed and maintained by the villagers, farmers, peasants, shepherds, fishermen and tribals living in hamlets, countryside and farflung areas. Their dances are neither codified, stylized, performed on the stage in traditional sense, nor taught by a professional guru and artist. It is out and out for the pleasure and enjoyment of the performers and not for the entertainment of others. It is characterized most by its spontaneity, collective impulse and participation, simplicity, freshness and lack of restraint.

The difference between a dialect and a language suitably examplifies the difference between a folk dance-form, and a rigid, stylized and sophisticated classical dance. Folk means natural, untutored, free, spontaneous, unconscious, uncouth, original and not artificial. Here we find correspondingly far greater free play and expression of feellngs, emotions and sentiments than in the classical forms. The folk people are born dancers: their gait, movement and various activities specially those of women betray their rhythmic tempo and sculpturesque and statuesque poses and postures. Folk dance-forms are intimately connected with the performer's life, daily activities, environs and physical surroundings, nature and its various moods and seasons. That is why diversity of climate, topography, etc. is so well reflected in them. They are not something separate and aloof from their life and living, but are like a beautiful design of various colours woven inextricably into the fabric of their life.

Being instinctive, unconscious and an expression of primitive genius, folk-dances are ever fresh, fragrant and imbued with a wonderful capacity to renew and to imbibe new influences and yet to maintain tradition and continuity. Indian folkdances are part and parcel of rich cultural heritage and immense artistic wealth of the cuntry. A folk dance is always a community and collective affair, a celebration shared by all, sometimes very simple, nothing beyond rhythmic shuffling of the feet containing very thin element of footwork and at times very complex, complicated, breath-taking and dramatic Similarly in respect of costume, it may range from near nudity to very colourful, rich, gay and spectacular phenomenon, peculiar to the region and area.

Rooted in antiquity, the Indian folk-dances, in their incomparable multiplicity, variety and diversity, pose a big problem as far as their classification and categorisation is concerned. They are at once thoroughly religious, social, ceremonial, seasonal, martial and ritual, and always inspired by mythology, legends, scriptures, and above all by the most primitive instinct to express pain and pleasure through linear and sculpturesque stances and rhythmic movements. They overlap and merge to some extent into one another. Their staggering variety and richness inspire awe and wonder. But it is not possible to cover all of these here, and so only most representative ones are taken on regional basis for the sake of convenience. They all are accompanied by songs and music and drumming. The drumming can be said to be ubiquitus. The drum has been given a great sanctity since remote antiquity.

Tribal And Folk Dances of Desert Region (Rajasthan and Gujarat)

The desert region comprising the whole of Rajasthan and Gujarat can be divided into two parts for the sake of convenience. These are the Great Desert and the Little Desert. The former extends from the Luni River in Rajasthan upto the edge of the Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat. The entire Rajasthan-Sindh frontier runs through it. The Little Desert sprawls from the river Luni between Jaisalmer and Jodhpur upto the northern wastes. This entire zone is totally sterile comprising rocky, arid, sandy land cut up by ridges and other wastes. South-east of the Aravali flow the Banas and the Chambal

rivers making the land relatively fertile, green and hospitable. Again the Rann of Kachchh can be divided into Great Rann and Little Rann. The entire Rann is a vast stretch of salt-soaked wasteland.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan, a rainbow within Indian Union, the legendary land of Rajas and Maharajas, is the second largest State of the Indian Union. It is a country of sand dunes, desert and rocks interspersed with wonderful people, palaces, forts, myriad colours, placid lakes, secluded sanctuaries, gardens, fertile tracts, forests and superb scenery. The Aravali ranges, one of the oldest on the planet, divide the State into ruggest south- east and sterile north-west. Its Thar Desert sprawls across the border for into Pakistan.

The spectacular best of Rajasthan can be seen and enjoyed in its folk dances, fairs and festivals. Each season has its plethora of folk-music, dances, fairs, festivals, ceremonies and rituals, and each occasion is a time of aesthetic expression of the genius and spirit of its exuberant culture. There is always a time for celebration, merry-making, frolick, fun and dancing. Rajasthan is the land of most ornate people and great oriental splendour. The people here still live in their picturesque legendary and historical past and that is why the country abounds in colours, gaiety.

Rajasthan is the home of the Rajputs, the heroic warrior clan, who ever perferred death to dishonour. They carried on and continued the martial, social and political traditions of their forefathers. Their towering individuality and valour have been instrumental in shaping the destiny of the country which has been in the melting pot several times since the days of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata to our own days.

Ethnically, Rajasthan presents a picture of myriad colours, hues and shades in the form of its varied tribes. There are Bhils, Minas, Bhopas, Jats, Jogis, Gujjars, Baoris, Banjaras, Kalbelias, Kanjars, Sansis, Grasias, and many other professional communities of dancers, singers and performers. They all are gay, hardy, fun, dance and music-loving. Their stock of folklore, music and dancing

is extensive and rich. The hard and hostile living conditions of Rajasthan have shaped the life-style of different communities in a different manner in different regions of the State. Accordingly the catalogue of the Rajasthan folk-dances is endless.

Ghoomar and Jhoomar are two most colourful dances of Rajasthan. Ghoomar is performed by women on the occasion of estivals like Teej and Gangaur and such other celebrations in village and town squares and courtyards of the houses. The ladies, dressed in customary colourful flowing skirts, choli and odhani and adorned with myriad silver and gold ornaments dance in a ring. This dance is found throughout the length and breadth of the State but its forms vary from place to place in accompanying songs and footwork. Marked by pirouettes, long and rapid swirls and dancing in a circle, Ghoomar is an extremely captivating dance. The only musical accompaniment is the singing and clapping of the dancers themselves.

Equally fascinating and colourful is *Kachhi Ghori* dance done by male professional performers. They ride the dummy ghoris or mares made of sticks and two baskets. The heads of the animals are prepared very artistically to create the impression of the real horses. The dancers, generally two of three in numbers, attach and adiust the horses to their waists very skillfully and dance and prance about merily dressed like heroes with swords in their right hands. *Dhol* and a kind of trumpet called turahi are the accompanying instruments. They provide a rich enterainment by their mock fights and acts of chivalry on the occasion of marriages, etc., when they are engaged to delight the guests and other spectators.

The elaborate and ritualistic *Tera Tali* dance is performed by women folk. Two or three dancers squat on the floor with a number of small bronze cymbals tied to their various parts of the body and naked swords held between the teeth by each of the dancers. Their faces are veiled. They also have two-three small brass-pots each balanced on their heads one upon the other. With two cymbals in their hands they strike the other cymbals tied to the their bodies. It involves a lot of difficult, vigorous and complex sliding and moving on the ground in the squatting position. A man

accompanies the dance on ektara, also provides vocal support by singing a song.

Khayal is a popular dance-drama of Rajasthan. It is generally performed by professional artistes. Its history is traced far back to four centuries from our times. The female roles are done by men. The theme, generally in ballad forms, is from the Hindu mythology, legend, chivalric lore and numerous social concerns and happenings. Thus, the thematic scope and range is wide enough. The people of Bhavai community, an offshoot of the Jats, performs these dance-dramas to the accompaniment of drum, sarangi and cymbals. Sometimes the undercurrent of satire is very bitter but it is enjoyed by all the crosssections of audience in a good and humorous spirit. The romance of Dhola and Maru is another popular theme of the Bhavai dancers. The troupes travel from one village to another after the rainy season is over and entertain their patrons with the dance-drama full of music, mime, dance and acrobatics.

The Dandiya dance is another very popular dance-form of Rajasthan. It a kind of Rasa-nritya done in a circle by a group of men with small sticks in their hands. They make pairs and strike the sticks in pairs which change with the progress of the dance. The drummer stands in the centre of the ring and leads the performance with the rhythmic drumming. Though begun with simple shuffling of steps, the dance grows swifter and swifter with the faster beat of the drum. They dance round and round shouting in between "Ho-ho" to accentuate the emotioncharged atmosphere. The accompanying songs sung by the dancers revolve round Krishna legends. An expression of pure joy and rhythm of life, the Dandiya dance can be performed on any festival when the crop is ready for harvesting and the spring begins.

The *Kathputali* dance is performed with string puppets. The director or the *Kathputaliwalla* manipulates the dances of the various puppets by their strings held in his hand. While he makes the puppets dance, his wife plays on the drum and sings the story. The stories relate with heroic deeds of the historical or legendary heroes. A *Kathputali* show generally begins after dinner at about

eight in the night and lasts for about two hours.

The *Pabuji-ki-par* is another typical Rajasthani folk-form which is painted sung and danced. The story of Pabuji, the hero and Deval Devi, the heroine, is painted beautifully on a scroll. The scroll is hung on the wall and the story, in a ballad form, is sung and danced involving a lot of acting, mime, acrobatics and dancing. In this performance the *Bhopa is* assisted by his wife *Bhopan*. The song and dance drama is accompanied by a drum and a string instrument which like a sarangi is played by a bow. The final scene in which Deval Devi commits Sati following the defeat and death of noble and heroic Pabuji at the hands of Jind Raj is full of pathos and great tragic beauty. Ultimately they are shown reuniting in the heaven. The use of painted scroll coupled with abhinaya, music and dancing makes *Pabuji-ki-par* a unique Rajasthani multimedia folk-form.

Besides these there are many other dances done by various wandering tribes and nombads like Kalbelias (snake charmers), Nats, Doms, Kanjars, Banjaras, Sansis, Bhils, etc. For example, take the Kalbelia dance done to the accompaniment of a typical musical instrument called Pungi and a daphali. The Pungi is made of dried gourd and is played like a flute. They sing tunes on the Pungi, play on the daphli and dance to the great delight of the spectators. A daphali is small drum of a wooden fram fleld in one hand played by the palm and fingers of the other.

Gujarat

Gujarat in the northwest corner of India throusts out into the Arabian Sea. Geographically it consists of three distinct parts— the main region with its big towns and cities, the peninsular Kathiawar or Saurashtra, and the Rann of Kachchh, a low lying marshy region. It is an ancient land and its history goes far back to legendary and prehistoric times beyond the Mohanjodaro and Harappan civilization to Mahabharata age or even earlier. Gujarat has been a great maritime and mercantile land since times immemorial.

Ethnically, Gujarat is both rich and a colourful state. Inhabited by

such tribes as *Paradies, Meramis, Thebas, Kolis, Dangs, Ahirs, Vaghris*, etc., it has also been a home of a number of professional dancers, singers, performers and musicians. Many other communities and sub-communities connected with agriculture and cattle-breeding complete its ethnical picture. Its various folk-forms are based on mythology, legend and religious themes. Many of the tribals and adivasis have much in common with the tribes and aboriginals of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and share in their religious practices and folk traditions. The Garba is a popular and well-known women's folk-form of Saurashtra region of Gujarat. It is a Lasya nritya and its history is traced back in remote antiquity to the reign of Lord Krishna in Dwarka. Garba may be performed on several occasions but the chief one is the Navaratra celebrations at the beginning of Aswin before Dusserah festival. It takes its name both from the song which accompanies it and the garbi, and ornamented earthen pot with a light within which is ceremonially placed in every house during these nine days. The pot has its sides cut into beautiful floral and leaf designs. The pot, illuminated from inside, and its light filtering out through the cutout patterns, presents a charming sight.

The village belles carrying these garbi earthen-lamps on their heads in a procession go from one house to another performing the Garba dance. The leader of the troupe sings the first line of the song and is followed by its repetition by the rest in a chorus. The song is accompanied by dance and rhythmic clappings and beating of a drum (dholak). While dancing, the women bend gracefully sideways and the arms and hands sweep and sway beautifully sideways, upwards and downwards in order to keep the timing by clapping. It is a socio-religious dance in which every woman or girl can take part irrespective of caste or social status.

The *Goph Gunthan* dance is a folk-form of Saurashtra in which a braid of coloured strings is woven and unwoven by the dancers resulting into complex and beautiful choreographical patterns. One end of the string is tied to a roof and the other is held by the dancers. These coloured and tasselled strings are often decorated with mirrors and ribbons. This dance requires a lot of practice, precision and meticulous exactness.

The *Tippani* dance is done by women of a particular caste. It is a community dace in which the women beat and level up an imaginary floor with *Tippanis* or sticks with rounded bases and small bells at the top end. They dance in a circle or a semicircle. They dance round and round in a ring shaking their Tippanis in perfect unison and rhythm as they beat the floor. Their synchronised work movements, deft manipulation of belled sticks and dancing present a exuberant performance resulting in a great delight both to the dancers and the beholders. The Padhara dance is performed by fishermen. The fishermen in a group dance with sticks in their hands and imitate the action of rowing of the boat.

The Dandiya Ra is most characteristic dance of Gujarat. It is performed mostly by men holding sticks with tiny bells tied to one end. They sing songs and strike their sticks rhythmically which produce sweet jingling sound because of their tiny bells. The dance in a circle begins with a simple shuffing of feet. The dance being associated with harvesting, reaping and sowing is performed on Basant Panchami, Navaratra and Sharad Purnima. The musicians standing outside the circle, accompany the dance on drums, etc. The dance involves complex circular movements in which various floor designs and patterns are formed resembling those painted on the walls of the mud houses in the villages. These designs and patterns traced out on the floor by the dancing feet and by the mimble and dextrous fingers on the hut-walls are considered to possess a great magical significance and auspiciousness. The accompanying songs are of great antiquity and have been traditionally handed down from one generation to another. In a Dandaya Rassa-dawn from one generation to another. In a Dandya Rassa-dance, the dancers have the opportunity to display their individual skills in solo and smaller dances performed within the larger circles.

Tribal and Folk Dances of Great Plains

(*Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal*)

Below the high Himalayana Ranges lie the great plains of the Indus, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. These plains are one of the greatest stretches of flat alluviam and also one of the most densely

populated areas of the planet. Not unlike other parts of the country, these plains have unbroken folk dance and music tradition of several millennia. These folk-forms derive their themes from religion, mythology, legends and folk-literature. The folk-dances of the region, though separate and distinct from the classical ones, cannot be considered in isolation for they are part and parcel of the larger organic whole. Ethnically, the pattern is relatively simpler but consists of many races, castes, sub-castes and communities.

The Punjab

The Punjab, the land of five vivers or waters, and rich golden harvests, is the granary of the country. Once the gateway to India, the Punjab is a prosperous state because of sheer hard work, virility, courage, single-mindedness and exuberance of its people. Sikhs make up the majority and they do possess along with their Hindu brethren both the energy of religious ferver and warlike temperament. They have and still can dare to suffer a lot for their faith. They are masters in following the plough and taking up the sword against the enemy. The Punjab, the cradle of Sikhism, is also the land of rich culture, history and folk- dances and music. The folk dances of Punjab are simple expressions of simple peasant-folk.

The Bhangra and the Giddha are the two most popular and famous dance-forms of the region. They are two community dances of Punjab in the real sense of the term. Bhangra, though associated with Baiskhi celebrations after the Rabi harvest, is performed on all occasions and festivals or on any occasion fit for festivity and fun. It is dance of harves and joy unalloyed. Exclusively confined to men, it continues for hours together and if one or other of the participants gets exhausted and falls out of the dance, his place is taken by another waiting eagerly outside the dancing circle. It begins with the lust drumming. As the drummer beats vigorously, the participants form a big ring round him and the ring grows begger and still begger as more and more people join it. It begins with slow momentum and pace, but gradually it is transformed into a vigorous, exciting and sinoius dance item. It is characterized by abrupt forward bendings, leaping on one leg, throwing of legs here

and there and hands above their heads, the snapping of fingers while they dance in a circle round and round the dummer. Dome of the dancers have bright coloured sticks which they raise over their heads, place them on their shoulders and do captivating acrobatics.

One of the dancers sings a couplet from folk-poetry and then it is taken up as a refrain by others in a chorus. One by one all the participants sing the refrain by turns which is repeated by the rest of the dancers. In between they yell and shout "*Balle balle*; *Oai-Oai*; *Uh-uh*" etc. When the dance has reached its climax a couple of the dancers comes forward and dances a kind of duet in the centre of the circle followed by many more couples one each at a time. The pair presents a variety of dance movements including spinning, pirouettes, jumping, leaping and some complex acrobatics. The total effect of Bhangra is that of virility, bigour and gay abandon.

The costume of the dancers is very attractive and colourful. They wear lungi or tahmat, a flowing kurta, a bright red, yellow or blue waistcoat and a matching turban. The lugni is always coloured or a piece of check length. The shoes they put on are equally beautiful, being richly embroidered. The accompanying orchestra consists of dholak (percussion instrument), cymbals, a big pair of reed pipes called alghoza, a chimta (a big pair of iron tongs). The theme of the song of Bhangra offers a wide scope of subjects which ranges from love and romance to everyday village life and peasantry.

While the Bhangra is exclusively a male affair, the Giddha is confined to women only. Like Bhangra it is a dance of pure joy, gay abandon, merriment and exuberance. The dancers dressed in colourful long skirts (lahanga) kurtas and veils of various colours and shades form a circle. They also put on many kinds of jewellery. It begins with the playing on a dholak by a woman followed by a chorus and rhythmic clapping. The dance is characterized by simple movements, clapping and striking of each others palms, dancing in a circle and then in groups. As the dance progresses, the pairs from the ring come forward in the centre and execute different types of dance movements including piourettes and spins in which two together join their extended hands and perform what

is known as *kikli.* They sing many songs one after the other which relate to love and romance, everyday life and problems and household chores. A Giddha song runs:

I was taught neither to read and write, nor was sent to a hermitage for learning. But still I compose new songs everyday at sunrise and sunset. My songs spring out of an inner urge over which I have no control. Oh guest! come and enjoy some of the Giddha dance.

Haryana

Haryana, once a part of the Punjab is predominently agriculural land inhabited by such martial races as the Jats, the Ahirs and the Rajputs. They are brave and industrious and know how to wield both the sword and the scythe with the same dexterity. The ancient land of Haryana is rich in tradition, culture, legend and lore. It was here on the sacred soil of Kurukshetra that Lord Krishna imparted the eternal and celestial message of Bhagvad Gita to dejected and depressed Arjuna amidst the din and clattering of the Mahabharata war, more then 5000 years ago. Haryana, the gateway to Delhi, east and central India, has witnessed many battles at Panipat and Karnal, but three of these have been most historic and decisive.

Haryana has been the cradle of ancient Vedic civilization. There are many laudatory references to its rivers and places in early Indian literature. The famed but now lost river Saraswati once flowed through this land. Many of Haryana's dances are closely associated with harvesting and the change of seasons. The Daph dances are very popular here. These are performed either by men or women separately or by both in a mixed way. Daph dances are done at harvesting and other social and religious occasions like Holi, etc. The songs accompanying the dance deal with love, romance and valour and are full of subtle humour and satire. Daph is a kind of big percussion instrument held in one hand and played gently by the other. While one person plays on the Daph, the others in a group form a row or a ring and commence the dance at a slow tempo which increases as the dance progresses. The dancers sing the song to the rhythm of the feet and the accompanying instruments.

In a mix-dance women dance, clap, sing, spin and pirouette while men play on *daph, dholak,* cymbals, etc. When the momentum reaches its height, the individual dancer comes forward in the centre of the ring and shows her individual skills in the art, and then retreats to her place and another comes forward. And thus the dance continues for a long time at a stretch. The women put on long and flowing loose skirts, kurtis and odhnis and adorn themselves with many kinds of ornaments. The song is sometimes in a simple question answer dialogue-form. The Holi and Lahoor or Loor dances are purely female affairs. Khoria and Phag are other folk-forms of Haryana.

Uttar Pradesh

Rich in history, legend and culture, this state of India is the biggest in terms of population. The variety of interests, the number of hill resorts, centres of pilgrimage, form of dances, etc. that it offers are unrivalled both in number and magnificence. No other part of the country has to offer more in terms of political involvement, geographical variations, religious fervour and cultural diversity. It is here, in this State that Rama and Krishna were born and Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon. The Ganges, the holiest of the holy rivers, and the backbone of India's prosperity waters this province. It is here, in the north-west corner of the State that the loftiest Indian peaks of the Himalayas stand in their matchless glory and splendour. It is a land of the highest peaks and the flattest and extensive plains in the world.

The ethnic picture of Uttar Pradesh presents a phenomenon of great variety. In the mountainous and hilly region in the north there are many tribes, castes and classes including aborigines, *Khasas, Bhotiyas, Doms, Bavaras,* etc. In the sprawling plains there are *Jats, Ahirs, Dhobis, Chamars, Banjaras, Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Kabirpanthis,* and a number of professional dancers and musicians like Bhands, Miracis and Natuvas. The agricultural community also consists of a variety of castes and subcastes. All these castes and communities are a great lover of dance and music. They follow various faiths and worship several local and not so local gods and goddesses and observe

numerous feasts, festivals and celebrations full of music, dance, mime and merry-making.

Ramalila and *Rasalila* are two most popular dance-dramas of Uttar Pradesh. The former is associated with Rama and the later with Krishna. Ramalila is celebrated for ten days ending on Dussehra festival which falls on the tenth day of the bright half of Ashvin (September-October). *Ramalila* is based on the epic story of the Ramayana. *Ramalila* is staged as a dancedrama at various places in most of the cities, towns and villages of Uttar Pradesh with great fervour as a ritual. During the performance the Ramayana is constantly recited accompanied by dance and music. It presents a fine blending of dance, music, mime, *abhinaya* and poetry before an enthusiastic and religious audience.

Struggle between the forces of good and evil, and the eventual victory of the former over the latter is basic to the Ramayana theme. Rama symbolizes the best in humanity and Ravana the evil forces. The ten-headed Ravana obducted Sita, the consort of Rama with the help of another demon Maricha. Ravana persisted in making Sita his wife, but she always thought of her husband Rama. Rama sent his messengers to Ravana and urged him to return Sita, his wife, but the wicked Ravana refused to do so. Rama fought a fierce battle and ultimately routed and killed Ravana and all his associates and regained Sita.

The annual Ramlila celebrations of Ramanagar in Varanasi is something very special. The *lila* is enacted on an area covering over three square miles across the Ganges for thirty days. It is a spectacular performance enjoyed by thousands of people every day for full one month. The large audience sitting in a semicircle enjoys the thrilling performance punctuated with fights, bouts, sword dances, acrobatics, etc. The local Maharaja presides over the function and offers worship to Lord Rama daily. It was started over 125 years ago by the then Maharaja Udit Narain Singh of Varanasi. It is a ritual, dance-drama spectacle and a great celebration all rolled into one.

Rasalila folk-dances are performed with great pomp and pagentry in various parts of Uttar Pradesh, in general and in Braja Mandala,

that is Mathura, Vrindavana and adjoining areas in particular. They form a real and extensive of folk-form. They commemorate in music and movement the most cherished divine love of Radha and Krishna. In dance and song are enacted the gegends connected with the childhood, adolescence and early youth of Krishna with cowmaids and cowherds. The dances are highly developed in terms of footwork, mime and music, all requiring great skill and technique. There are only a few other folk-dances which can compete favourably with these lilas in popularity. Rasalila is a group dance performed in a mandala or a ring to the accompaniment of songs relating to Krishna legends and the music of drums, cymbals, and flutes. Many of the steps of this complex dance-pattern are common with those of the Kathak. The lila-dances are characterized by pure nritta sequences, quick footwork, spinning, acting, pirouetting, stamping of the foot, supple arm movements and nimicry to the accompaniment of sweet music both vocal and instrumental. Disguised as Radha, Krishna and *gop-gopis*, the actor-dancers express the various mood and sentiments by gestures, acting and mime and glide gracefully on the toes, bend forwards, backwards and sideways while dancing. Only young boys take part in it. They at first make a single file open circle and then a close one by holding one another's hand and per form the dance in a group, solo, or as a duet.

During Holi celebrations also there are much dancing activities. Men and women in separate groups throw with big syringes coloured water on each other and also coloured powder. They dance merrily with light and lively steps throwing coloured water and powder all around to the accompanyment of joyous singing in chorus and music of drum, daf, cymbals and harmonium. Their clapping, fast footwork, swaying, pirouetting, bending forwards and sideways gracefully present a beautiful scene. This springtime colour carnival is an occasion of much joy, singing, dancing fun and feasting.

With the coming of rainy season, begins the *Kajri* dance to the accompaniment of swing-songs. As if intoxicated with the smell of wet earth, the village and town belles and women commence their *Kajri* songs and dances. The theme is love and romance. After the

long scorching summer, rains are most welcome and so are these dances always fresh, light and invogorating.

Virile, vigorous and martial Ahir dance is performed in the Ahir community on the occasions of birth and marriage. The dance is always accompanied by song and instrumental music of *dholak* (drum) and *kansi* (cymbals). The male dancers wear short tight knickers, the rest of the body is left bare, except for the adronment of some ornaments like armlets, necklaces, etc. In place of usual ankle-bells, a band of small brass bells is tied around the lower waist. These jingling bells accentuate the complicated footwork by underlining the time-patterns of the dance movements. The theme or the song presents a good variety. Now it is the tale of heroism and chivalry of the community, now the dangers and difficulty of a journery now the problem of a daily life. Ahir dance involves a lot of skipping and fast movements to the sound patterns of the music. Their songs show good artistic and lyrical accomplishments.

Similarly, the dances of the *Chamar* community are simple performances consisting of a few pure dance sequences punctuated with much buffoonery and jesting. The theme revolves round religious myths and legends with an undercurrent of subtle- satire, humour, wit and repartee. The songs are characterized by a lot of pun, double meaning, coarseness and humour bordering vulgarity and lewdness. These forms are more dramatic and mimetic and have not much of dancing.

The *Dhobis* form another such community which believes in singing and dancing on any occasion of celebration, a birth, a marriage, a festivity, a festival and the like. The theme is related with family affairs, quarrelling among relations, love and romance and mythology. They dance to the accompaniment of dholak and a sort of sehani and obviously the song. With characteristic hip movements and sharp knee dips, they dance in various formations.

The *Banjaras*, a nomadic tribe, have their own dance-form which they do around a communal bonfire outside their improvised tents in the countryside or just across the bounds of a town or a city. They collect honey, medicinal roots and herbs and perfumes from the forest to eke out their living. Naturally, the theme of their

accompanying songs is the hazards of the collection of honey, the roots and the perfumes from the animals. The women wear long and loose skirts called lahanga, a tight bodice or choli, and a length of coarse cloth as a veil. Their dance is slow but charming, which they perform to the accompaniment of a dholak.

There are a number of professional communities in U.P. which sing, dance and perform on stage against payment. The professional *nautch* girls with their highly skilled and beautiful dances are very popular with the upper middle class people. They are in great damand on the occasion of marriages, births and such other social and family celebrations. Though sensual and devoid of spiritual elements, they are by no means cheap or vulgar. These dancing girls wear long, loose and flowing skirts, gathered and tied securely at the slim waste. They also wear a choli of matching silk or velvet and a fine veil thrown above the head and the shoulders. This three-piece costume is tastefully and richly embroidered with silver and gold threads. The charm of the costume is further enhancea by a number of ornaments and jewellery. Nautanki is a form of dance-drama, again performed by the professionals on the stage. The theme of Nautanki revolves round chivalry, patriotism and conflict between good and evil- drawn from the scripture. *Nautanki* is a popular dance-drama in vogue throughout the province.

The *Bhands* are another such professional community of singers, dancers and performers. Formerly they were very popular with aristocracy and were well known for their jesting, buffonery, repartees and bouts of wit and also for music and dance. Their dance was never a piece of art as such, but had a lot of fireworks in the form of foolery, horse-play, jesting and joking. They were mainly entertainers and jesters employed by the rich, sometimes permanently.

The Uttarakhanad region of U.P. comprising Garhwal and Kumaon is inhabited by *Khasas*, aboriginals and other tribes. They are mainly cultivators, peasants, cattle-breeders and she pherds. The majority of them are the Hindus. These simple hilly people have a rich stock of folk-music and dances. The *Chnapeli* is one of the

most popurar variety of Kumaon folk dances. In every fair the *Chhapeli* is a common phenomenon. There you can find a number of Chhapeli singer-dancer groups competing with one another spread out in the open green. It is performed at a brisk tempo to the accompaniment of hurka of dholak, manjira and flute. Sometimes, a bagpipe may also accompany the dance. Its them is related with love and romance. The dancers perform in twos, holding mirrors and coloured handkerchiefs in their hands. They wave these gracefuully as they move forwards and back wards to the gay rhythmic footwork, they refrain in chorus and the instrumental music. There is much room for improvisation both in accompanying songs and the dance itself. The quick tempo coupled with romantic theme accounts for its mass appeal and popularity. Sometimes the *Chhapeli* may be in pure song and music form and may not be accompanied by a dance. It is exclusively a male peformance.

The *Jhora* on the contrary is a mixed performance done by both men and women. It is a community Kumaon dance in which a large number of men and women participate. They dance in a ring interlocking their arms. It is a lovely and lively dance done with simple foot-work. It is always accompanied by songs sung by men and women in a duet form to the rhythm of the *hurka* (drum) and manjira (cymbals). The text of the song grows as it sung. The leading singer provides the next line by improvising it on the spot. Thus, it has a lot of spontaniety and improvisation. The dancers prance, sit down, crouch, stand up in unison maintaining a regular time cycle.

The *Jagar* dances are connected with exorcist ritualistic practices. These are done by a particular class of people to drive away evil spirits and to invoke the spirit of certain local deities. The recitation of ballads is accompanied by exotic beats of the *hurkas* and the thalis (brass plates) followed by a dance by the medium involving a lot of fanatic leaping, jumping and shouting. The ritual ends with the bidding of farewell to the invoked spirit by the singer.

West Bengal

West Bengal, relatively a small, a small, long and narrow region,

most of its land comprising central and southern flat alluvial plain, is a gift of the river Ganga. The northern region of Darjeeling is hilly and the river Teesta (three-streamed) flows through it. Hooghly, one of the two forkes of Ganga in the lower reaches, is the life line of West Bengal.

Bengal takes its name from king Banga, the son of the mythological king Bali. Music and dances of West Bengal have been determined by the religion and the occupation of the people they follow coupled with the toprogaphy and ethnic pattern. In the north live many hill thribes like the Lapchas, the Tibetan Bhutias and the Nepali *Sherpas.* In the central plains and southern marshlands and tropical region covering the entire 24-Parganas and Midnapur we find such tribes as the *Santhals,* the *Orans,* etc. Most of these tribes are common to Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. The Lepchas and the Bhutias are the Buddhists and the rest of the tribes follow Hinduism. Then there are many rural and urban communities. The rural communities depend mainly on agriculture, fishing, and vegetable plantation. Paddy, jute and tea are the main agricultural products of the state. The forest products include timber, bamboo, firewood and honey. A popular Bengali saying '*Baro Mas Tero Parban*' meaning thirteen festivals in twelve months, very well reflects how the people of Bengal have fairs, festivals and celebrations for all conceivable occasions. They are common to all, city-bred elite and cultured, rural and tribal people. Music is a passion and obsession for them. But in terms of folk dances, their contribution is relatively meagre. However, the rural communities have many danc- forms, religious in nature and connected with chivalry, war, love and romance, devotion to gods and pastoral affairs.

The *Jatra,* a prominent but a common phenomenon, is more of an opera than a dance performance. This term also underlines the fact that these dramatic and operatic shows were performed by the itinerant troupes. Originally, it was based on Radha-Krishna legends, but now its range and scope has been so widened as to accommodate many other themes. It is visualized in its form and contents as a pilgrimagetl though the lives of the divine beings around whom the Jatra revolves. Young boys play the roles of

Radha and her intimate friends, the cowmaids. A *Jatra* performance reminds one of the Nautanki of Uttar Pradesh, the Tamasha of Maharashtra and Bhavai of Gujarat. Acting and singing are main in the performance and dancing a kind of concomitant. Its origin can be traced back to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a great Vaishnava saint who used to ddance and sing the enchanting songs composed in praise and devotion to Krishna. He would often enter into trance while dancing and singing. Following in the footsteps of Sri Chaitanya, many Vaishnavite poets wrote poems in devotion of Krishna which were dramatised and acted on the stage to the accompaniment of dancing and the music. The Jatra troupes are managed and administred by a man known as *Adhikari.* The Jatra is a fully developed operatic form performed by men and boys travelling from place to place.

The *Kirtan* dances are another popular folk of West Bengal. Spiritual in nature, all people join it with great religious fervour without any distinction of caste, age, social status, etc. It makes the *Kirtan* dance very popular and democratic in character. Danced to rhythm of *khol or mridanga* (drum), cymbals and chanting of sacred lyrics in a chorus. It is characterized by dancing in a circle with very simple but graceful fottwork, swaying of the body and lowering and raising of hands in an ecstatic way. Sometimes it takes the form of a procession taken through the town or village. Its origin is also traced back to the advent of Chaitanya Deva.

The Kathi is another dance-form of Bengal done by men in groups. Each of them holds a pair of sticks in his hands. They strike each stick with the other in perfect rhythm while dancing and singing in a chorus to the beating of a drum called *Madhole.* They produce varying patterns by playing and striking the sticks in many difterent ways.

The Baul dances is purely for entertainment and expression of the joy and rhythm of life. The Baul dances are as extensive as they are popular throughout West Bengal among the Hindus. It may be performed solo or as a group dance by wandering performers any time and anywhere. The characteristic features of the dance are simple but lively footwork, and joyous small songs sung to the

accompaniment of a single string instrument called Ektara or *Gopi-jantra.* The wandering groups of dancersingers can be seen here and there and everywhere in West Bengal eking out their living by means of these dances. The Raibeshe is an important folk-dance done by men-folk of the western parts of West Bengal. It is a martial dance and is popular among Domes, Bauris and such other low caste people. The accompanying instruments are a dhol (drum) and a kansi (a gong). It marked by vigorous, exerting and acrobatic movements often punctuated by wild shrieks and imitative actions of fight life the shooting of the arrow, the throwing of spears, and flourishing of swords, scimitar and knives. Now the dancers imitate the hunting on the horsebacks, now perform tortuous acrobatics, and now they surge forward towards the centre of the circle in a crouching position.

Tribal and Folk Dance of Himalyana Zone

(*Ladakh, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh*)

The great Himalayan Zone, the land of lofty mountains, most magnificent scenery, of fascinating valleys, snow-fed perennial rivers and streams, is also the land of rich and colourful cultural life. The great mountain wall of the Himalayas over-look the areas of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.

Ladakh

Ladakh, the land of monks, monasteries and mysteries, is a part of Jammu and Kashmir of Indian Union. Ladakh is also known as the Lunar Landscape, the last Shangrila and the Little Tibet. It occupies the 70 per cent of the total area of the Sate. The stark, sun-baked, barren, forboding, windsewept. rugged yet exciting region is the abode of lamasaries, yaks, hoary palaces perched on pinnacles and Buddhistic arts—colourful dances, colossal statues, tanakas, frescoes, mystery plays, palaces, stupas, monasteries, etc.

Ladakhis are of Tibetan descent and depend for their livelihood on agriculture and nomadic herds. They rear sheep and goat and migrate from one region to another and higher altitude to lower according to the season. They are great dance enthusiasts and find any occasion good enough for dancing. They are Buddhist by faith

and their whole life revolves round the castle-like monasteries perched on the hill tops and the ridges. These monasteries are the centre arts and culture and they are also the upholder of the religion. It was Padma Sambhava who founded the Byingmpa sect of Buddhist here in the 8th century. It is also known as the Red Hat-sect. Later on another sect Gulugpa, popularly known as Yellot Hat-sect was also introduced towards 14th century.

The monasteries here, among other things, have attached courtyards surrounded by galleries. These are meant for maskdances and mystic plays. These religious dances cannot be categorised either as folk or tribal. They form a different class of their own and have much in common with those performed in Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan. These colourful dance-dramas of great weired beauty are performed annually in different monasteries at different times of the year. For example at Hemis the famed mask dance-drama called Tscham-dance is held during June every year. It celebrated the victory of Buddhism over Bon-creed as well as the birthday of Padma brocade costumes and strange masks and perform their exorcising ritual dances with grat pomp and show to the accompaniment of large cymbals, gongs, trumpets, horns and drums. The dancers wearing the masks of divine beings, gods, demons and animals stage a fierce fight. Obviously, gods, represent the dharma and good, and the devils the evil and adharma. These dance drama begin at and maintain a slow tempo and are characterized by wide positioning of, and whirls in a large circle by the participants. These dance-plays, simulating a combat between good and evil are also performed to exorcise the evil spirits and to protect the followers of the faith against wicked spirits. These have become now so famous that people from far off places in India and abroad come to Ladakh to witness these dance-dramas and mystic plays braving all sorts of difficulties and incurring heavy expenses.

There are over 100 monasteries in Ladakh region. Some of other famous monasteries besides Hemis are those of Alchi, Lamayuru, Likir, Mulbekh, Phyang, Rizong, Spituk and Thiksey.

Kashmir

The valley of Kashmir, the paradise on earth, the Super

Switzerland of Asia, is inhabited by manye ethnic groups, races, sub- races including Aryan Dogras, Mangol Muslims, Buddhists, nomads, and the several tribes like the Wattals, the Gujjars and the Bakkarwals. They all are handome, hardworking, simple, fun-loving, and music and dance enthusiasts. The majority of the population consists of the followers of Islam. The traditional culture of Kashmir continues to live and flourish in its fol-songs, music and dances besides in its temples, mosques, paintings and crafts. From this picturesque valley we have such folk dance-forms as the Rouf, the Hafiza, the *Hikat*, the *Bacha Nagma*, the Bhandpather and some tribal ones.

The *Rouf* is a simple but a fascinating spring harvesting dance of the valley of Kashmir. The female dancers attired in rich skirts, and draperies and laden with silver jewellery face each other in two rows, and dance forwards and backwards holding one another by arms over the head and shoulder. While they dance their bodies bend above the waist delicately forward like creepers laden with flowers and fruits. The accompanying song is either in the form of a chorus or a simple question-answer dialogue form. These may sometimes have a philosophical and mystical touch. The Hikat is again a simple harvest and spring time dance performed by the boys and girls in groups and pairs. It is danced annually in April-May. The participant boys and girls interlock their arms and perform the simple dance to the accompaniment of melodic chants sung by the dancers. These songs full of sheer joy and gay abundance of life, are from local stock and pertain to the various aspects of nature there; the fascinating plants and trees, rivers, streams, lakes and lotuses in them, snow and village greens and the like. Occasionally there is also a strand of love and romance mixed with that of nature and environment. The girls wear ghaghara, a brocade cap called taich, chunari and various kinds of silver and gold ornaments. It begins with a slow tempo but gradually hots up into a fast dizzying footwork and speed requiring perfect balancing and timing on the part of the performers.

The Hafiza dance, as the name signifies, is performed by the female dancers called *Hafizas*. This dance-form dating back to antiquity reminds of the Devadasis of the South India. In the

medieval period *Hafiza* became very popular when the dancers performed while singing in *Sufiana Kalam*, consisting of ragas or melodies called muqams based on rich Persian literary tradition full of deep thoughts. The orchestra which accompanied it consisted of santoor (a string instruments) and called the "Veena of Kashmir", *tablas* (dukra), *shetar*, etc. Later on Hafizas were relegated to the position of professional nautch girls and were engaged to perform on many a social and ceremonial occasions.

Bacha Nagma, an offshoot of Hafiza dance-form, has been very popular as an item of sheer entertainment. Here boys perform instead of the women. The boys of tender age and delicate voice disguised as women, wearing long hair perform it. It is very popular and draws large crowd and as much applause. Accompanied by rabab, sarangi, shenai and drums, it involves quick spinning movements and pirouettes resembling those of Kathak. There is much expressional dancing as well, and the dancer has to interpret the song related to love and romance. Hafizas remind us of the Devdasis, and Bacha Nagma revives the memory of the Gotipuas of Orissa.

Bhand Pather is an ancient traditional folk form of Kashmir still extant and also very important. It is not bound to any time and place, and so it can be performed anywhere and a anytime as a dance-drama.

The various nomad tribes of Kashmir are also great dancers. Among the Wattals a dance-form closely connected with fertility rites is very popular. It is purely a male performance in which the participants dance in a circle round a pole topped with banner. It is enjoyed on many auspicious occasions to the accompaniment of instrumental music of nagara (a drum) and surnai or sehnai and some other instruments. The dancers sing as well. It begins at a slow pace and tempo but soon picks up the speed and tempo culminating into acrobatic leaps, jumps and a very loud music. Again it is a spring dance and here the pole symbolizes creation, fertility continuity, ebb and flow of life. They dance in circle, around it.

Himachal Pradesh

Nestled in the nort-west lap of the great Himalayas, Himachal Pradesh, a mountainous region, is Nature's own child. Himachal Pradesh, with its Lahul-Spiti immersed in barren and rugged splendour, fascinating valleys like Kangra, Kulu and Chamba, can rightly boast of a unique folk dance and music heritage. Dancing and singing is a favourite pastime of the people of this land. It is in their blood. The ethnic scenerio of Himachal presents a rich variety of races, religions and tribals. They all indulge in several forms of charming folk-dances. The dances are performed by both men and women either together or separately.

In the Chamba valley of Himachal Predesh live the *Gaddis*, equally beautiful and colourful tribe. The Gaddi women and men perform fascinating dances but separately. The female performances are tender and langurous, and those of men are vigorous and fast. The men-folk dance in a circle going round and round and singing songs of gallantry and romance. They do it on various festivals and other annual occasions and fairs. The Gaddi women, dressed in pretty costumes of skirts, shawls and head-gears and adorned with ornaments, dance in a circle going round and round to the accompaniment of songs sung in a chorus. While they dance they bend sideways and make beautiful hand and arm gestures. The theme of the songs is invariably a romance between a Gaddi lass and a youth and domestic affairs.

The *Gaddis*, like their counterparts the *Gujjars* and the *Bakkarwals* in Kashmir, are pastoral people and cattle-breeding is their main occupation. They are Hindus by faith and believe Shiva to be their originator of this universe. Besides Shiva they also worship many other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. They migrate trom one place to another in search of new pastures and fodder for their cattle. In short, they are livery and gay and love to dance on any and every occasion they can find.

Kulu is another charming valley of Himachal Pradesh. It is also known as the Valley of the Gods because of the fact of many temples and shrines deicated to various deities are located there. Every now and them some festival is held there which is invariably

accompanied by song, music and dancing. Of these Dusserah festival is the most famous. During this festival, held in October, all the gods and goddesses from the different parts of the region are brought in a procession in their respecitve gay palanquins to an appointed open place in the valley. The palanquins are richly decorated with flowers, garlands, buntings and umbrellas above, and incence sticks are burnt before the images of the deities. Thousands and thousands of people, men and women, young and old, children and householders assemble here in their Sunday best colourful garments and enjoy the celebrations to their hearts' content.

During this ten-day festival a variety of dances are performed which includes sword dances and a few others. The men-folk lavishly draped in tunics and trousers, shawls and plumed round caps form a dancing circle and commence with slow steps, which gradually gathers speed and tempo. The dancers hold handkerchiefs in their right hands which they wave gracefully to the rhythm of rochestra. The accompanying orchestra consists of dholak, narsigha, shehnai and Karnal. As the musicians sing of chivalry, patriotism and in praise of the deities and the warriors, the dance reaches a crescendo and climax, and then some of the dancers, come forward from the circle in the centre and commence, their sword dance brandishing their their bright weapons, moving continuously in a frenzy and at a very fast speed. These martial dances, performed against a back-drop of snow-peaked Himalayan mountains of Dholadhar and Kailash, also involve a lot of pirouettes and spinning at one place. The fesitval is celebrated with all the pomp and splendour and homage is paid to the deities. Bazars are set up for the sale of sweets, toys, household goods and endless knickknacks, and there is a lot of excitement, gaiety, marry- making and revelry.

Some other better known and popular folk-dances of the region are *Pangi* and *Sangla. Pangi* known after the valley of the same name, is a female dance in which a group of women perform in a circle with charming body turns to either side and hand raised above the head swaying in suple movements to the rhythm of the song and the dance. It is done seasonally in honour of the goddess *Devi.*

There are many famous *Devi* shrines in the area. On full moon day people visit these sharnes to pay their homage to the goddess and then these dance sare per formed. On these occasions fairs are held and the deities propitiated. *Sangla* is a mixed affair, and so men and women join together to pay homage to the local deities and mythological heroes. The men and women participants at first stand in separate rows facing each other, but with the progression in the dance they comingle. The accompanying songs are in a dialogue form of question-answer. One party sings on behalf of one character and then the other answers on behalf of the respondent character. As usual, these dances begin at slow tempo but gradually gather speed and momentum leading to the climax full of dizzy spinning and pirouettes. There are many other dance-forms either confined solely to men or women performers or done by both together. Many of these dances are done on the occasion of Yatras or pilgrimages to various shrines.

Tribal and Folk Dances of North-East India

(*Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura*)

The north-east India, popularly known as the "Land of Seven Sister". is characterized by simple and exotic tribals, lofty mountains, lush valleys,dense forests teeming with varied flora and fauna, fascinating scenery and pastoral life amidst isolated splendour. Ethnically, the area, very rich and varied in dance and music, presents a complex pattern of large tribal population. The multilayered and intricate cultural design makes difficult if not impossible the classification and categorization of the hill and tribal folk comprising over seventy-five per cent of the total population of the area.

Assam, remote, exotic and an extravaganza of landscape scenery, lies in the extreme north-east corner of India. Assam is ounded in the north by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, in the east by Nagaland and Manipur, in the south by Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya, and in the west by Bangladesh and West Bengal. Drained by the mightly River Brahmiputra and a network of its tributaries, Assam presents a vast canvass of varied tropical flora and flora and fauna including the last of that endangered species,

the one horned Indian rhino, sprawling tea carpets, lofty hills, deep valleys and a simple but spectacular tribal life.

Lying at the foothills of the Himalaya, the abode of gods, Assam is linked to the rest of India by an isthmus winding its way between Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Assan is a land where clouds float at your feet, hills emerge from its bosom and soar high like a chorus, and panorma changes with unbelievable frequency. It is here that one feels the freshness of they very first dawn of creation and has the ecstasy of almost touching the sweet dreams with his fingers. Far from the madding crowd, it is altogether another would, a walking reverie you are travelling through.

Meghalaya is inhabited chiefly by Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Tribes; in these tribes power and land, etc. are inherited only through women. They have their distinct culture in spite of the fact that most of them have been converted to Christian faith. They still follow their time honoured traditions such as erecting monolithic stones ot their honoured traditions such as erecting monolithic stones to their ancestors and celebrating the festival of Great Sacrifice marked with tribal rituals, dances, colour and gaity. Over 80 per cent of its population are engaged in agricultural activities.

Nagaland with its administrative seat at Kohima is a narrow long strip of hills running almost parallel to the River Brahmputra. The entire region is covered with hills, spurs, ridges and mountain slopes. The highest and awe-inspiring mountain peak Japvo, 2,995. metres, lies south of Kohima. It is a fascinating country with healthy climate, fertile soil, well-cultivated, drained and manured terraced fields of paddy. Rice is Naga's staple diet supplemented by meat and fish.

The term "Naga" is derived from Sanskrit "Nag" and literally means "hill-men". Nagaland is the home of Indo-Mongoloid hill-tribe known as Nagas. While the majority of the Nagas live here, a great number of them remain outside in the border states of Assam, Arunachal and Manipur. The term "Naga" covers many tribes. They are a warrior race, tall, robust, hardworking, gay, brave, self-reliant, artistic, freedom-loving, good looking and possess an inborn intinct for colour and intricate designs. They are also noted

for their keen sense of humour, splendid war dances and songs. The grisly sport of Head-hunting was in vogue till recently in some tribal pockets, but it has now completely died out. Most of the Women are held in high and honourable position. Over 90 per cent of Naga population depend on agriculture. And over 70 per cent of people are Christian by faith.

Tripura is named after a tribe. "Tipra", That inhabited the state and to which the ruling house of Tripura belonged. Tripura is actually a Sanskritized form of early Bodo name, Tipra by which the aborigines were known.

Arunachal Pradesh, rich in varied flora and fauna, is the home of a large number of tribes of different socio-economic and religious pattern. These are Buddhist tribes, Vaishnavite tribes and others with their own distinctive ways of life, living side by side in perfect communal harmony and peace. Studded with hills and valleys and comprising frontier divisions of Kameng. Tirap, Subansiri, Lohit and Siang, Arunachal is predominantly rural and pastral. About 94 per cent of its total population of 6,31,839 live in 3,257 villages. About 62 per cent of its area is under forest cover.

The tribes of Mizoram are of Mangolian stock and the Lushais form the main tribal group. Lushais are the dominant tribe and most of Mizo chiefs of old were from this ethnic group. Over 90 per cent of the population is Christian.

Bihu is the most important festival of Assam; Equally popular both among tribal and non-tribal population of the State. It is celebrated three times every year both by men and women. Of these three, *Baisakh Bihu* is of the greatest significance. It is observed during first week of the Indian New Year. The other two Kartika and *Megha Bihu* come in autumn equinox and winter solstice respectively.

On these occasions, after early morning ablutions, the people visit each other exchanging sweets, gifts and good wishes; worship the cows and other cattle and then follows in the evening the sessions of dance and music in groups called the *Husari*. They collect in the open and begin at slow tempo in a circle. One of the participants

sings the refrain and the rest follow him in a chorus. Gradually the tempo increases leading to a crescendo. The musical accompaniment includes the drun (dhol), the cymbals (tala), the bamboo clappers (tokka), the paupa (buffalo-horn) and fluts.

This very captivating and pulsating performance is also held under the shade of huge trees to the accompaniment of thrilling instrumental music and vocal songs comprising couplets which are repeated over and over again. They begin in a circle but break up into groups and execute fine choreographic designs, patterns and figures. The drummer leads the performance by singing the refrain and drumming and dancing it.

It is really an unforgettable experience to participate and watch these dances in the night illuminated by torches. The dancers, men and women, boys and girls, from far and near congregate and converge at one appointed place in the open or under a huge tree and begin the ritualistic dance. They dance and interpret the songs pertaining to love and romance with their gestures, mime and mimble footwork. The songs are marked with their liquid lyrical charm, rich poetical strain and ideas and enchanting melody. But these songs vary in contents from tribe to tribe and place to place. For example, the neotribal songs are different from those of the *Bodos*, the *Garos*, or the *Ahoms.*

The Jatras offer another occasion for dance and music. The Jatra festival commences with the celebration of Holi when the image of Lord Krishna is taken out on a journey in a palanquin and then back after two days amidst dancing, music and theatrical performances. It is celebrated in many parts of Assam, but the festival observed at Berpeta in Kamrupa district is of special significance. It is a great centre of *Vaishnava Bhakti* cult and the occasion is observed with great enthusiasm, devotion, singing and dancing sessions. Lord Krishna is taken out from and his shrine in a big procession and the people play Holi with must gaiety and exuberance to the accompaniment of devotional songs, instrumental music and dancing. Being without much codification and rules, the *Jatra* dances provide a great occasion for rich enjoyment of secular and erotic singing, dancing and theatrical

performances.

The dance-drama known as *Bhaona* is another popular item of Assam. The performance which may sometimes run for several nights, generally begins after night meals around nine p.m. and continues till day-break. It begins with the playing on khols (drums), invocative *Kirtan* and the appearance of the director or the *Sutradhar* who narrates the synopsis of the play through song and dance. He is generally present on the stage throughout the performance and provides missing links in between by his expressional singing and dancing. The female roles are played by the males. The theme of these dance-dramas is invariably from Krishna legends. The plays, composed and written by Shankardeva, a great Vaishnava saint leader, are performed by troupes of various *Stattras* or monasteries established by Shankardeva. These troupes meet their expenses from the donations and other subscriptions made by the devotees for whom they enact these- drama full of religious fervour and exuberance.

The *Oja Palli* dances are perhaps the oldest Assamese traditional performances. Their scope and range is wide enough and it includes themes belonging to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the various Puranas. They may be performed on the occasion of the worship of the snake-goddess *Mansa Devi* or any other occasion. The *Oja*, with the help of his two assistants called *Pallies*, enacts these dances to the accompaniment of *Khanjani* a pair of small cymbals. They sing and dance and interpret the story through gestures of hands and other limbs and facial expressions. Their dance consists of simple broad rhythmic footwork to the beat of cymbals.

The *Nati-Nritya* revives the memory of *Devadasis* of South India. The Natis are temple dancing girls who perform in temples on certain occasion. The female dancers, financed and supported by the temples, have to lead unmarried life and perform in the temples. Such Natis are still there in certain temples as in Hazar Haya Griva Mandir, near Nalbari at Hazu in Kamrupa district, the Kamakhya temple at Gaughati and Vishvanathghat temple at Darrang in Shibsagar district. Many other Shiva temples in Assam had their

own dancing girls in the past. These female dancers enacted and danced before the temple deity to the accompaniment of religious songs, drums and cymbals in the Devadasi tradition of South India.

The Naga is a generic term under which come many tribal communities spread all over the hills and plains of north-east India. Their dances have been conditioned by their environ, occupations, religious beliefs and practices and the social setup. Their culltural activities and especially their dances reflect varied aspects of their life-style in rhythmical movements and choreographical designs. Their dance repertoire is as rich as varied. Most of these dances are war-like and martial in essence.

The head-hunting or war dance in the most important. It is in vogue in almost all the Naga tribes with slight variation from one community to another. The dancer, dressed in ceremonial war costume and adorned with many silver, brass and iron ornaments, enter the dancing arena in a single file to the chant of a chorus. Soon they form single circle and attack the imaginary enemy with their spears held in the hands. They also thrust their spears at themselves in imitation of enemy attack and deftly avoid the attack. As the dance terminates there is a crescendo of shouts, cries and calls. Obviously, there is no musical accompaniment and the chant and shouts of the dancers themselves provide the background music. Characterized by primeval grandeu, brandishing of flashing spears and many attacking stances and postures, it is a apectacular performance which only the Nagas can do.

The Bamboo dance is popular among the Kuku and the Mizo Nagas. In it four long bamboo poles are used across one another so as to form squares which can be closed and opened by the men holding the bamboo poles at the ends to the beating of the drums. The dancers deftly hop on one foot outside the cross when it is closed and then inside the squares when they are open. Generally done by girls and women, it presents a complex spectacle with two or more dancers performing skilfully in and out of the squares to the fast beating of the drums. The dance begins at a slow tempo but as the drumming increases, the dance grows faster and faster into a vortex of very quick footwork, clapping and fast drumming.

A solo dance is an exception among the Nagas and the group dances are the rule. The Kabuis have many colourful and inspiring dances. Both men and women, boys and girls perform together to the loud beating of a big drum. The audience collect in the village green and stand around the dancers. The Kabui women also have a dance done only by themselves. They begin in a squating posture singing and waving their arms and hands in a very supple manner in the air and on the ground. Gently and gradually they stand up and perform a very lively and graceful dance involving some very difficult rotating movements of the hips and left footwork, change of positions and kicking high up of the legs in the air. It is performed as a ritual to propitiate the local deities.

Nongkrem is an important dance of the Khasis. It is danced annually at Smit, near Shillong during a week long ceremonial rites and rituals when many fowls and goats are scrificed to propitiate the mother goddess. In the dancing arena of the shrine a number of unmarried and virgin girls perform this dance on the occasion of the Puja rituals to the accompaniment of cymbals, drums and flutes. The Nongkrem dance is done on main Puja day from early morning till evening. The girls dressed in their ceremonial best and adorned with various costly jewellery dance with their hands hanging on both sides and the eyes looking down. They shuffle their feet forward and back ward in the centre while an equal number of male dancers dance a kind of maritial dance around them in a circle. When they recede two semicircles are formed and when come forward a full circle is made. The movements of the male dancers comprising whirls, pirouettes and spins are larger. They hold naked swords and shields in their hands which they brandish rhythmically. Sometimes they hold flywhisks instead and wave them towards the dancing girls. The orchestra-men called the *Dhulias* play their instruments in the corner of the arena on a raised platform while the dance continues. The audience sits or stands up around the arena.

The *Nruira Lim* or Cock-fighting dance is full of great excitement and fun. Popular among the young Naga boys and girls, it can be performed anywhere and at anytime of the year. The boys and girls stand opposite each other in two rows and stage a mock cock-fight

leaping and jumping back and forth and their heads raised and hands in motion like claws of the cocks. Similarly, there are many other dances performed as a sport. The are related to hunting in which various birds like hornbill, cock, etc. and animals like mithun, tiger, etc. are imitated and songs pertaining to these creatures are sung. Accompanied by songs, drums and cymbals, these dances done for the sheer joy of life and as an expression of community living. create a rich spectacle of rhythm and sound. Inspired and conditioned by their ecology, these imitative dances reveal their intimacy and close affinity with nature.

The Khamba Lim dance is a harvest dance performed both by men and women together. Popular among the Zemis, the Angamis and the Kabuis, it is enjoyed at the beginning of the harvesting time to pay their tributes to the Mother Earth for her bounty and blessings. Danced ritualistically in two opposing rows of the male and female, the dancers may change their position but the rows are never broken. They do it to the beating of drums, sounding of horns and singing of the songs shuffling and stamping their feet, going round and round.

In Arunachal Pradesh also such dances as imitate the movements of the birds and animals are very popular. Besides the mock-fight, they indulge in the dances centred around the yak, the peacock, the deer and the tiger. The recreational value of these dances can hardly be overemphasized. The yak is an important animal for the hill tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. In the yak dance the story of a young man is interpreted who has been driven away from home and hearth by father and how he comes across a yak and befriends him. Similarly in other animal dances some beautiful stories underlining the intimacy and love between man and beasts are told and danced and their movements imitated. In the cock-fighting, the dancers use masks of the cocks and perform to the loud beating of drums, cymbals and gongs. The people of Arunchal also have their harvest, ritual, religious, marriage and birth dances too numerous to be recounted here. The female dances are characteristic for their delicate slow movements, small steps and interlocking at the waist, while those of men are without such interlocking patterns.

In Tripura there are many non-Naga tribes and they are agriculturists and practice shift or jhoom cultivation. Many of their dances are concerned with sowing and harvesting. A well known dance of Riang tribe of Tripura is performed to propitiate and worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and plenty. It is done during harvesting time. They call Lakshmi as the goddess Hajagiri and so the dance is known as Hajagiri dance. In it both men and women participate. The dance begins at slow but terminated at a very fast tempo.

In the valley of Manipur live many non-Naga tribes and they have their own distinct dance and music traditions. Besides the famous *Lai Haraoba*, they have numerous other dances connected with hunting, harvesting, animal and bird life, rituals, rites and various ceremonies. The Lam is a generic term which is applied to very chan Lam and so on. The Keet Lam is a cricket dance and the *Khongi Lam* is concerned with birds in which their gaits, etc. are initiated and danced. *Chawng Chan Lam* is a significant and very popular ceremonial dance of the hill tribes of manipur performed by men of a particular village and the neighbouring villages. It has many touches of a maritial dance and is followed by a grand feasting at the expenses of a tribal chief. The generic term Lam also remind us the so well-known *Poong Cholam* and *Karial Cholam*, the tandava dances of the drums and the cymbals respectively. This valley has given us, above all, one of the most famous classical dances popularly known as Manipuri based on noblest dance traditions and philosophical thinking.

Tribal and Folk Dances of Plains Plus Plateaux

(*Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa*)

Madhya Pradesh, the largest state of Indian Union, constitutes the heartland the central highlands of the country. It separates the Great plains from the plateaux and coastal plains of the Southern Peninsular India. The great central plateau of Madhya Pradesh, streaked with the ranges of the Satpuras and Vindhyas, the river systems of the Narmadas, Tapti, Chambal, Sone, Betwa, Mahanadi and Indravati, and possessed of some of the richest tropical forests, has a varied natural setting of great charm. The Malwa region is

rich in black cotton soil, the low lying areas of Gwalior, etc. have lighter soil, whereas the Narmada is made up of rich alluvial deposits.

Bihar in the north-east of Madhya Pradesh is characterized by the Gangetic Valley, sprawling alluvial flat plains and hilly forests. In the south begins the Deaccan Plateau. The rivers Kosi and Gandak from the north and Sone from the south join the Ganga. The river Damodar winds its way through the plateau of Chhotanagpur, and its valley has righly been termed as the Ruhr of India. Bihar is one of the richest states of India in mineral wealth and accounts for about 40% of the country's total mineral wealth.

Ever washed by the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal in the east, Orissa is bounded in the north by Bihar, in the north-east by West Bengal, in the south by Andhra Pradesh, and in the west by Madhya Pradesh. This rural riverine land of multi-splendours, is watered by the rivers Mahanadi, Brahmani and Vaitarni flowing in the south-esternly direction before merging in the Bay of Bengal. These rivers and their tributaries provide the state with rich alluvial tracts.

Orissa is possessed of an extensive plateau in the interior with sprawling coastal plains in the foreground. This plateau, an undulating upland, gently slopes down towards the Bay of Bengal. Its extensive palm fringed coast-line running to 482 kms, serene holiday beaches, pronounced rural environs, charming blue hills rising here and there abruptly from the plains and the plateau, green wood-lands, rock caves, so rascinatingly sculptured temples and other monuments, picturesque mud villages set in greens, modern industrial leviathans, colourful and gay tribals and so rich and varied handicrafts make Orissa a miniature India. Here is Bharata in a capsule.

Madhya Prdesh

Historical and geographical attractions apart, the tribal and aboriginal people of Madhya Pradesh are no less gay and colourful. These exotic ethnic groups and communities have their own distinctive folk-lore, traditions, rituals, fairs, festivals, music and

danc-forms. There are about forty-eight tribals in all in Madhya Pradesh and they constitute twenty per cent of the total population of the State. They live in hills and plains and also in towns. Predominently they are small agriculturalists or agricultural labourers. In the hill areas they depend on forests, its produce and hunting for their living. Primarily they are concentrated in the districts of Bastar, Bilaspur and Jhabua, however their presence is uniquitorus throughout the region. They include the Gonds, the Maria and Muria, the Baiga, the Bhils, the Banjaras, the Dhanwars, the Savras, the Karias, etc. The village community consists of the craftsmen, the professional performers like Nats, dancers, musicians, the drummers called Dholis, etc. They all have festivity in their blood and make very good dancers and musicians. The tribal population is Hindu by faith and believes in various gods and goddesses including the village deities and offer them then prayer and worship in the form of dancing and music as well.

The Karma dance of the Gonds is done both by men and women-folk together. The Gonds dwell in the Maikal Hills of the Satpura ranges in Madhya Pradesh. They have many charming dance-forms and the Karma is one of them. The men and women stand separately in two rows facing each other and then commence the dance in graceful and well measured steps. The dancers interlink thein arms and sway rhythmically to the beating of drums called "Timiks." The men dance in front of the women making various acrobatic moverments to show their prowess. As the dance progresses and the tempo increases, they climb up the shoulders of others and perform to the claps of the women, who by they make a dancing ring around them.

The another folk-form of the Gonds is the Jhoomar dance. The Jhoomar dances are accompanied by love-songs and by those with social and domestic themes. The stilt dances are fairly common and popular among the tribals. The dancing on stilts (gandi) is done during the rainy season particularly by young boys. It is both a dance and a pastime and its main attraction lies in balancing and skilled manipulation of feet. There are many attractive forms performed on the tall stilts.

The Saila is another dance-form of the Gonds noted well for its fast and vigorous movements. The Saila has many varieties. In essence it is a martial dance and reminds of the times when the Gond tribes used to march against the enemy. It combines entertainment, art and physical exercise all three into one. Men dance it with spears, swords, etc in their hands and shuffle their feet, stamp them on the ground, skip and jump vigorously. In olden days a Saila dance was followed by the female dance called Rina when the male performers stopped theirs out of utter exhaustion and fatigue. It is accompanied by a song, but there is not much singing in comparison to dancing.

The Kaksar dance is done by the Maria tribe of Bastar before the rainy season sets in. It is a ritual group dance in which blessings of the deities are sought. The young boys and girls dance together to the beating of large drums, small timki and playing of the flutes and select their life-partners followed by marriage ceremony.

The Gaur or Bison dance is another popular and captivating dance of the Murias of Bastar. Is is a virile and vigorous dance reflecting jory, gaiety abundance and rhythm of life and performed on the occasion of marriage, etc. The men wear aheadgear of a pair of bison-horns topped by peacock feathers. Their faces are veiled with strings of beads and cowrie shells. They also wear a short length of loincloth and its one end is allowed to hang in front. The women dressed in dhotis and adorned with head jewellery and heavy anklets carry sticks. They together dance forming many complex patterns including that of a figure of eight. The women begin in a row and then go through and round the male dancers making beautiful designs. The accompaniment is the large and long drums suspended around the men which they beat loudly and lustily as they dance round and round in a circle. Religious and ritualistic in essence, the Bison or Gaur dance is performed primarily to propitiate the goddess of Shakti.

The Bilma dance of the Baigas tribe is danced during social ceremonies to the loud beat of the large Mandar drums. Bilma literally means joining or coming together. The Baigas of one village go to the Baigas of another village and they together

perform the dance in gay abundance in which men, women and children all participate in a perfect amity and harmony to the accompanying song in a chorus.

The Sua (parrot) dance of the Baiga women is a ritualistic performance. It is popular in Chhatisgarh in Maikal hills. In this imitative dance the gait and flight of the parrot are imitated and danced. The woman carries a basket on her head in which is placed an earthen pot lighted within with a lamp and its mouth covered with mango leaves. The basket is filled with paddy. The women dance in a group to the accompaniment of the clappings and singing. The theme of the song is the new bride's sorrow at her separation from her husband and the joys in expectation of the early reumon. It is done during harvesting season at a slow and languorous tempo imitating the movements of the parrot.

There are numerous other tribal dances like Beej Putani, Goda, Lakshmi Jagar, Dagla, Phag and Lola dance. The Murias of Bastar perform Beej Putani at the time of sowing seeds. Goda is done during the rainy season in the month of Shravan, and Chai. Danda in the month of Chaitra. The Lakshmi Jagar is performed to please Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Young men and women from nearby villages dance before an image of the goddess placed under a tree for the whole night, and disperse at day-break and then again assemble at night for a full one month.

The Dagla dance is performed by the Bhils. Only men take part in it but the Pali dance is a mixed performance. The latter is more vigorous involving speedy spins, turns and skilled footwork on toes and flat foot. The Banjara menfolk have their Langi dance performed during July-August (Shravan) to the accompaniment of songs of patriotism and bravery. It is also performed on Rakhi Purnima, the full moon day of Sharavan when the sisters tie colourful threads and rakhis on the hands of their brothers for their long life and prosperity.

The Phag dance is done by the menfolk during Holi celebrations. The dancers carry swords, spears and other weapons, as they dance marching forwards or retreating backwards they reel and revolve about to the accompanying song relating to chivalry and courage.

The women folk dance the Lota-form in which a number of small pitchers filled with water are balanced on their heads one upon the other. Then there is lively Saundary dance. It can be enjoyed at any time of the year like the Lota dance. The dancers form two rows facing each other, come forward, clasp hands and dance swaying and swinging back and forth and in circles while singing all the time.

Bihar

Bihar shares India's international frontier with Nepal in the north and is bounded by Bengal in the east, by Orissa in the south, by Madhya Prasesh in the south-west and by Uttar Pradesh in the west. About 19% of its total area comes under forest cover; there are 12 protected areas of forest.

Bihar derives its name from "Vihara" which means a monastery. Bihar indeed is a land of monasteries-Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Muslim and Sikh shrines dot the State. It is here that India's first mighty empires rose and fell. Bihar was known as Magadha in ancient days. From 6th century B.C. to 5th centry A.D. almost for a millennium, Bihar remained the seat of great Indian empires. Ajatsatru ruled from Rajgir. In the 4th century B.C. rose the Mauryan Empire. Then Patliputra (modern Patna) became the seat of administration. It was from here that Chandragupta Maurya ruled over his vast empire and Ashoka the great, his grand son, sent his messengers of peace, non-violence, international understanding and mutual tolerance to the different parts of the country, and to the foreign lands. With the rise of the Gupta Empire, Magadha rose to glory and splendour again. The Guptas were suceeded by the Palas of Bengal who ruled until the end of the 12th century when they were overthrown by the Muslims. In 1764 the British annexed Bihar and ruled until India's Indepdendence in 1947.

Bihar has been the cradle of two great religions of the world 'Buddhism' and 'Jainism'.

The exotic tribes of Bihar are excellent musicians and dancers. They include the Santhals, the Hos, the Oraons, the Bhumijas, the Kharias, the Savaras, the Karwals and a few others. In all, there are

about 15 tribal communities. By profession they are agriculturists, shift cultivators, nomads, hunters, food- gatherers, professional singers, dancers and craftsmen. Some of these tribes are common to Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. They are concentrated in the districts of Singh bum, Ranchi and Chhotanagpur.

Being passionate singers and dancers they have a veriety of musical instruments. The drum among these occupies the pride of place. The drum-beat has become one with their life and heart- beat and they have tried successfully to convert it into a phonetic expression. The fascinating drum range and variety includes the madol or mandar, the nagara, the dholak, the tamak, the tumdak, the brda, the dhak, the dhamaka and many others. Then there are large metal cymbals (Jhal or kasa thal) stringinstruments, various types of bamboo flutes called bansuris, horns and narsinghas.

The dances of Bihar tribals revolve round the religious beliefs, the worship offered to deities, the change of seasons, marriage and other social ceremonies, rites and rituals. Festivals accompanied by dancers are an integral part of their life-style. There are a series of dances connected with courtship, marriage, sowing, harvesting, fertility, hunting and worship. The Magha dances performed in the month of Magha (January) are complex and ritualistic. Its one form called Anandi is performed on the time of marriage, the another form known as Beha is connected with ancestral worship and the sowing of the seeds. The dances are accompanied by drums, large cymbals, flutes and nagaras. The men and women form separate rows facing each other, interlock their arms at the back and dance back and forth. They advance and retreat from each other, make semi-circles swaying on one log and holding the bodyweight on the other. All this while they sing and chant and never undo the interlocking of their arms. These dance-forms of the Santhals of Chhotanagpur are as thrilling as infectious.

The Karma dance is associated with fertility. On this occasion young boys and girls dance together and the girls offer to the boys sprouted barley seeds. A branch of the Karma tree, which symbolises fertility, is cut and planted in the centre around which the dance is performed. Accompanied by song, drums and flutes

they dance round and round. Planting of Karma saplings is an essential part of the dance ritual.

On the occasion of Sarhul estival the Jadur dance is per formed. Sarhul celebrates the union of Mother Earth and the Sun-god. Amidst great rejoicing and festivity dances are held to the accompaniment of songs, the assortment of drums, flutes and large cymbals. Choreographically, this form of dance of Oraons is akin to those of the Hos and involves interlocking of arms behind the back, erect torsoes and swinging and swaying of legs to the liltings rhythm, and precision of footwork. It is performed both by men and women folk together.

The Santhals are musicians and dancers par excellence and have dances for every imaginable occasion. The martial dances—Gollwari and Paikha are marked with vigour, virility and a lot of jumping and leaping in the air. They carry bow and arrows while doing martial dances and perform mock fights and attacks. Their courtship and marriage dances are typical. These dances, romantic and lively in nature, are performed on full moon nights. The loud drumming, resembling thunder, calls the belles of the community and they come dressed in their fineries, adorned with flowers, feathers and assemble under a large banyan tree. The young men come forward taking strides with drums and lilting songs on their lips, and then the dance commences in two rows, their arms interlinked in pairs. The rows surge forward like rhythmic waves and then recede with supple footwork and swaying heads and bodies. The boys in the row opposite play on flutes, drums, large cymbals and sing songs in perfect harmony. After the dance the boys and girls mingle and have a good chat.

They have their hunting and sowing dances. On Dassai festival men-folk dance from one locality to another. Then there are the Jhika and the Lagren type dances in which men and women dance together. Men form the outer ring and the women the inner circle. The Dhang and Langi are exclusively confined to women. The Lagren has many forms and variations according to the occasion of performance and it can be enjoyed on any occasion, be it a marriage, a festival or social gathering. All these dances reflect

their collective nature, cohesion, community feeling and social awareness. They are great spontaneous collective singers and dancers. The *Santhal* women and girls can be seen singing and dancing while engaged in their daily chore like sowing, plantation, journeying to and from the forest. The work and sing simultaneously and in between pause for a round of dance. They use song and music as : convenient tool of dancing. Dance is a superordinate and all the rest is subordinate. They are gay, colourful tribe and enjoy every moment of the life. The Santhal women use various ornaments as adorment. They are of silver, brass, bronze, shell, glass or flowers. Their houses are also decorated with beautiful coloured animal, and forest motifs. They are very skilled painters as well, and their folk-paintings have inspired many great artists.

The *Oraons* are equally colourful. They are skilled farmers and excellent hunters. Their gaiety and jest of life is well reflected in their hunting and socio-religious dances and music. The Oraon women adorn themselves with ornaments of silver, bell- metal, brass and shells. Their costume is no less colourful. Besides Karma and Jadur these tribal people have Martial and Jatra dances. The martial dances are done by men to the accompaniment of loud drums alone. They wield and wave their weapons with much ferocity, shout and shriek and dance in a circle marked with great frenzy and solemnity. Sometimes they break the circle and run into columns in imitation of battle formations.

The Chhau of Seraikela in Bihar is a unique semi-classical dance. The term "Chhau" means a "mask". It is a mask-dance in which many classical folk and tribal dance elements have been finely blended. These elements are from the Bharata's Natyashatra and a number of from folk-tribal dances of Bihar and from Gotipua dance-style of Orissa. The Chhau is also in vogue in Purulia in West Bengal and Mayurbhanj of Orissa. Originally, it is a ritual dance and has evolved in its present form as a result of synthesis of so many folk and classical elements. Consequently, it lost much of its rural and folk character and became a semi-classical dance-form.

The Chhau basically might have been a group performance but now- a-days it is done as a duet or a solo performance. In it, masks made of paper pulp, are put on. The theme of a Chhau revolves round the myths and legends drawn from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. But occasionally secular themes are incorporated specially for the rural audience and spectators. An entire story can be related and danced through the vigorous limb-movements but there is no expressional abhinaya as the face is covered with a mask. It is an open air performance done to the accompaniment of shehnai, dhol, nagara and flutes. Its graceful movements have been stylized, coddified and refined to the extent that some people now like to categorize it as a classical dance. Some of its great exponents like Guru Gopal Dubey have successfully used its techniques in choreographing a famous Greek play like Antigone. The use of masks in Chhau lends an element of mysticism and an authentic touch to the legendary characters, the gods, goddesses, the heroes and the heroines of the two sister epics and the Puranas. The Tandava dance of Shiva as *Ardhanarishvara* is one of the popular themes of the Chhau. Since in Chhau some classical traditions are followed, it requires a strenuous training from the young age. At least five years vigorous training is essential to become and adept Chhau dancer. Performed by male only, the Chhau dance involves virile, vigorous and precise footwork consisting of a lot of complex patterns, leaps, rapid turns and many gaits. In short it is a well thoughtout planned and choreographed dance. The dancers wearing captivating and rich gold and silver brocaded dresses in myriad colours, colourful bead ornament around the neck and the exquisitely designed symbols stitched on the costumes present a rich feast of colour, rhythm and sound.

In the Jatra dance again the mock fights are danced and enacted between the Oraons of two localities or villages. The opposing parties enter into a friendly combat with long poles decked with pennants, wielding large and thick sticks and clubs. They engage in the mock combat with such enthusiasm that the fight gives the impression of a real conflict and clash. The Harbori Jatra is connected with the worship of the ancestors. Besides these, there

are other numbers of the Oraons performed by the young girls in the streets, courtyards and the greens of their villages for the sheer joy and exuberance of life Dancing is also a most common and sane source of recreation and entertainment for the various tribals of Bihar.

The *Jata-Jatin* dance, a typical form is in vogue in Mithila, it is done by women alone on full moon nights in the rainy season. It lasts from midnight till dawn to the accompaniment of a drum. It involves a lot of mime in which the romantic tale of Jata and Jatin is danced and interpreted. The young man Jata loved Jatin deeply, but as the fate would have it, a boatman, wicked and villainous kidnapped the girl. The boy and the girl had to suffer many hardships and sorrows, before she was freed from the clutches of the boatman and united with her lover Jata and lived happily everafter.

Orissa

In Orissa one out of every four persons is an Adivasi or Tribal. These tribals are heavily concentrated in the hilly tracts of Western Orissa. In the coastal regions they constitute a small percentage. They live there in a certain degree of seclusion and prestine form. They must have settled there in obscure past long before the coming of the Aryans.

The aboriginals still lead a simple, traditional and colourful life of hunting and agriculture amidst deep woods, valleys, lush forests, and primitive situations in spite of the inroads of so called modern civilization and developmental programmes. Over 62 distinct tribal groups live in Orissa, each one with its own culture and traditions different from other. The main Adivasi Groups include Kondhs, Bondas, Santals, Juangs, Parajas, Oraon, Godabas and Koyas. The dormitory life among the Bonda youngs is quite fascinating. In the evening unmarried boys and girls enjoy music, dance, frolic and fun together and spend the night in dormitories until their mutual intimacy develops into a marriage. The simple, gay, abundant and colourful tribal life can be a great source of entertainment and education to the visitors. Their life is most characterized by dance, music, rituals, hunting, gaiety and wild ways.

The aboriginals and tribals of Orissa have several things in common with those of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. By profession they are nomads, hunters, craftsmen, agriculturists and cultivators. The dwell in hills and valleys, hamlets, villages and towns. Like *Santhals* and *Oraons* of the neighbouring states they also have the practice of the dormitory. The dialects they speak are connected either to Dravidian or Mundari group. Their festivals are directly linked with the change of seasons, the cultivation activities, hunting and religious rites and rituals in which the Hindu deities are worshipped and propitiated.

The *Magha Jatra* and the Karma are agricultural festivals. The Magha Jatra is celebrated in January on the occasion of Magha Sakranti when a hut is erected and then set on fire. Its ashes are used in ploughing the field. The occasion is marked by worship to gram devatas and the Sun-god and a captivating community dance in which all men and women participate. The Karma festival is shared by the tribals of such other states as Bihar and Madhya Pradesh as well. Obviously, it is a fertility ritual. As usual a Karma sapling is planted and then a community dance is performed both by men and women-folk around it. Men and women form separate rows facing each other, interlock their arms and begin with simple shuffling of the feet to the accompanying music of drum and songs in a chorus. Gradually the music increases to a crescendo and so does the dance to higher and higher tempo. Different tribes perform this same dance at different times and look upon it from slightly different angles. The Bhumijas of Mayurbhanj do it in Bhadra and the tribals of Sambalpur observe it in autumn. For the former it is a harvest dance and signifies good fortune and rich harvest and for the latter fertility. The dancers form lines and then circles and dance bending, swaying and swinging in perfect harmony, and imitate the harvesting activities like the cutting, reaping and gathering of the harvest. Choreographically, these dances are simple and not design-oriented.

These are many beautiful and fascinating community dances found among the Orrisan tribes when men and women, boys and girls dance for the sheer joy of it in spring season or during harvest. For

example the *Juangs* have a number of animistic and imitative dances in which the dancers make typical movements of a bird or a beast. These animal and bird dances are quite captivating and amusing in their mime and dramatic quality. They Gonds do a peacock dance with peacock feathers tucked in their head-dress. They imitate the bird in its gait and dance looking at their own shadows. Similarly the pigeon the pantner, the bear, the tortoise and the tiger dances are per formed. Thus, they have a very rich repertoire of animal dances.

The *Paika* dance among the Oraons of Orissa is a fine example of a war or martial dance. Men arrayed smartly as warriors in their colourful turbans and tight dhoties stand in two rows. They hold in their hands wooden swords and shields and engage in a fierce mock-combat. They come forward slowly towards each other, but suddenly the tempo is increased as the battle begins and they whirl their swords and attack each other. The rows break and cross over followed by great leaps, jumps and acrobatics to the accompaniment of drums and wind instruments. The Paika dance is performed on the occasion of marriage also when the mock battle is staged and the bride is, as if by force, carried away by the groom's party.

In another number of the mentolk, the *chhadiya*, we find another example of a war dance. The men dressed in red-shorts and armed with bows and arrows and *chhadiyas* (stick) per-form this dance marked by swift and simple footwork, high leaps and jumps and vigorous pirouettes in the air to the accompaniment of drums and wind instruments. It is a manly and virile dance.

Similarly the *Bhatra* tribe of southern Orissa perform a hunting dance characterized by its revelry, liveliness, and virility. On the occasion of Holi festival they set out for hunting in parties and on return perform their community dance joined by their women-folk. The men and women sing alternately in question-answer form. Men recite stanzas describing their exploits of hunting and the women in answer sing songs of praise or of ridicule as the case may be. Women laud them if the hunting has been a success and ridicule if it has been a failure. Men wear short dhoties secured

well with coloured stripes of cloth, and colourful turbans topped peacock feathers. In their hands they carry short bamboo staves which they strike together to mark the time.

The *Ghumara* dance of the Oraons of Orissa also deserves mention. It assumes variious forms and shapes in different areas. Named after the musical instrument and the song of the same name, the *Ghumara* is performed to the accompaniment of a song, the scope of the song is very wide in theme. It may relate to day-to-day life and its problems, a barren bride's longing for a child or a lion or tiger devouring a calf. In the Ganjam district it is performed by boys noted for their skill for playing on the simple percussion instrument. They play the instrument deftly while dancing characterized by many complex rhythmical designs consisting of leaps, spins, pirouettes, bending, sitting and standing stances and movements. This dance-form done by the bodys reminds one of the Gotipua temple dances of Puri and other cities and towns of Orissa.

Orissa has a rich and varied repertoire of dances—harvest, pastoral, courtship, marriage, hunting, martial, community, ritual and religious dances. The *Khonds* do many dances to the accompaniment of a musical instrument called *Pleka.* The Khond boys and girls come together and dance in gay abundance forming two circles. The inner ore of the girls and the outer one formed by the young men. The love-songs are composed on the spot spontaneously and sung alternately by the boys and girls to the simple but lively music of the threestringed Pleka. They dance simply shuffling their feet and hands joined together in a circle, swaying and swinging to the rhythm of the clappings and the instrumental music. In the high hills of Koraput the *Bondo Porajas* celebrate their spring festival by dancing on raised platforms amidst the cluster of their huts and houses. The dancers are mostly women, richly adorned with anklets of jingling bells, heavy brass necklaces, circles of beeds and cowrie shells around their necks, and armlets and bangles. The men keep company on the instruments like dhol and tamak. The accompanying songs delineate, the beauty of nature and end in a kind of invocation seeking blessing of the deities.

The *Bhumijas* perform a ritual dance called *Jadur* to propitiate their god *Buru Bonga.* They celebrate the occasion on the nearest hill top and offer a kind of rice beer to the Mother Earth followed by a gay community dance by men and women down the hill to the village. Such simple dances to propitiate the deities are common to all the tribes. Dancing is a most convenient, satisfying and recreative medium through which they can express their love of rhythmic movement, commemorate their hunting expeditions or invoke the blessings of the deities.

Trivikrama (*taking three steps*)

God. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). It may originally have been the name of a sun god, but is taken as the incarnation of Vishnu which strides the world in three steps in his dwarfish manifestation, and is linked with the Hindu perception of the three parts of the world-heaven, air and earth. His Sakti is Santi. Normally depicted with the left leg raised. Attributes: arrow, bow, club, conch, knife, lotus, noose, plough, prayer wheel, staff and sword.

Truth

Hinduism states *Satyameva Jayate,* meaning 'Truth Alone Trimphs', ''Being truthful to oneself'' is one of the most important teachings of Hinduism. The greatest apostle of Truth in modern times is none other than Mahatam Gandhi. His autobiography ''My Experiments With Truth'' is just that. The greatest follower of Truth in ancient times was King Harishchandra. It is said that this great king gave up his kingdom his wife and only son for upholding the Truth (his promise) to Sage Vishwamitra, According to Narada Smriti, Truth is the best means of purification of the soul. It says that if telling a truth and a thousand horsesacrifices are put in the balance and weighed, it will be found that Truth weighs more. Truth according to Manu, is the best austerity a human being can perform and a man of truth attains the state of Godhead when living in the doby. It is the lack of truth or uttering falsehood that makes our lives miserable. Whenever we lie, we are actually punishing ourselves for momentary gain of some object for which we pay dearly in future with a multitude of problems. It is a style on the part of many to tell lies and in their own mind they suffer

with a guilty conscience.

There is no such thing as that you should always utter truth, even to the extent of making others' lives miserable. For example, if you see a mother with a very ugly child, you don't have to say to her, "What an ugly child you have"! Here that truth is unnecessary. Instead if you say: "I pray to God to bless your child with health and happiness," you are telling another truth and you avoid unnecessarily hurting the feelings of the mother or you could avoid any comment at all. If you are a car salesman, tell the people the limitations of the car you are selling along with the good points of the car. By telling truth, you, as a salesman, will be able to sell a lot of cars as long as your cars have some positive points in them. If you cheat people in your profession, always believe that others can cheat you a thousand times in their professions also. For example, an auto-mechanic can give you back your car with brakes half done and that could result in a fatal accident. The baby-sitter who takes care of you infant can be inattentive and that could even result in the death of your infant. I admit that once in a while the truth will hurt momen tarily but in the long run it will pay you well. For example, if you do not like the behaviour pattern of one of your friends, you are better off telling that truth than trying to cover it up with lies and later suffer for that. So it is better on your part to tell truth and live by it even if that will will result in your getting hurt once in a while.

Tvastar (*carpenter*)

Creator god. Hindu (vedic). The 'divine builder' who fashions living creatures on earth. The Hindu equivalent of the Roman god Vulcanes. An *aditya* or sun god and the father of Saranyu. Attributes: *homajakalika* (an uncertain fire device), ladle and two lotuses. Also Tastar; Tvashtri; Visvakarman.

U

Udadhikumara

Generic name of a god. Jain [India]. One of a group of deities under the general title of *bhvanavasi* (dwelling in places). They have youthful appearance.

Ugracandika *(violent Canda)*

Distinct form of the goddess Durga. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). One of a group of *navadurgas*, the nine durgas'.

Ugratara (*violent Tara*)

Goddess. Hindu (Puranic). A temble deity who carries a cup and a corpse upon her head.

Uma

A form of the goddess Parvati. Hindu (Puranic). Uma is identified as the consort of Chandrashekhara, a form of Siva which includes the moon amongst his attributes. The meaning of her nome is unclear, but possibly has maternal connotations. As Uma Maheshvara she fought with demons including Mahisha. Attributes: lotus, mirror, rosary and water-jar. See also Somaskands.

Untouchables

When the Aryans settled on the banks of the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra, they were forced to divide their society into four distinct groups based on labour, for the smooth functioning of society. They were : 1. Brahmanas — priestly class to work in temples and study and propagate religion. 2. Kshatriyas—royal and

fighter class to rule and defend society. 3. Vaishyas—business class to see all commodities are properly distributed. 4 Shudras—to help all other classes in their respective duties. According to Manu, Brahma (God) ereated Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs, and Shudras from his feet. The division of labour was a very good idea, but in course of time, it degenerated. Some say that a fifth division of people emerged in Hindu society in course of time, and these people were known as outcastes or untouchables. Another group of historians says that it was Shudras who became the untouchables in society. Mahatma Gandhi called the untouchables by the name Harijans (children of God) and fought for their emancipation. The Government of India abolished the practice of untouchability and today, Harijans are well taken care of in Government circles. Untouchability was a curse on Hinduism. It stood against all Hindu ideals and principles. It stood against all Hindu ideals and principles. It only helped conversions from Hinduism to other religions.

Upakesini

Minor god. Buddhist. An attendant of Arapacana.

Upapattivasit (*control of finess*)

Minor goddess. Buddhist. One of a group of vasitas personifying the disciplines of spiritual regeneration. Colour: mixed. Attribute: a creeper.

Upayaparamita (*perfecting success against enemies*)

Philosophical deity. Buddhist. Spiritual offspring of Ratnasambhava. Colour. green. Attributes: jewelled staff and staff on yellow lotus.

Upulvan (*like the blue lotus*)

Local god. Singhalese [Sri Lanka]. The most senior of the four great gods of the Singhalese panthenon. Identified with Vishnu, according to one tradition this deity had the specific task of protecting the culture of Sri Lanka from Buddhism. Conversely he stood by Gautama Buddha against the Hindu Mara.

Usas

Goddess of the dawn. Hindu (Vedic). The daughter of Dyas and according to some texts, the consort of the sun god Surya. An auspicious deity. Usas brings the dawn, heralding Surya, and drives away darkness. She is the all-seeing eye of the gods. In the Rg *Veda* she is depicted as a beautiful young virginal figure who rides in a hundred chariots. She sets all things in motion and can render strength and fame to her devotees. In addition to being perceived as a sky goddess, she is also drawn as a mother goddess in the guise of a cow. Epithets include 'mother of the gods' and 'mother of cows'. She is invoked to give the boon of longevity, but a more malignan aspect reveals her as a huntress who wastes human life. Usas sometimes enjoys a domestic worship as a guardian hearth goddess who drives away darkness and evil spirits. She disappears, however, from the later traditions of Hinduism.

Usnisa

God Buddhist A *dikpala* or guardian of the zenith direction. Also a coleective term for a group of eight deities, including Usnisa, who are perceived as extensions of the *dhyanibuddhas.*

Note the word describes, additionally, a type of curled hairstyle fourn in the characteristic iconography of buddhas. Colour: yellow. Attributes: jewel, lotus, prayer wheel and sword. Three- headed.

Usnisavijaya (*victorious*)

Primordial goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). Form of Vairocana, widely worshipped in Tibet. Regarded as a female *bodhisattva* or *buddha*-designate, and a *dikpala* or guardian of the zenith direction. Also a deification of literature. One of a group of *dharanis.* Colour: white. Attributes: arrow, bow, image of the Buddha on a lotus leaf, jewel, noose, prayer wheel, staff and water-jar. Three-eyed, three-headed and with eight arms.

Uttarabhadrapada

Minor goddess of fortune. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). A moderate *naksatra*; daughter of Daksa and wife of Candra (Soma).

Uttaraphalguni

Minor goddess of fortune. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). A moderate *naksatra*; daughter of Daksa and wife of Candra (Soma).

Uttarasadha

Minor goddess of fortune. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). A benevolent naksatra; daughter of Daksa and wife of Candra (Soma).

V

Vac (*speech*)

1. Goddess of the spoken word. Hindu (Vedic). In some texts she is a daughter of Daksa and consort of Kasyapa. Alternatively she is the daughter of Adbhrna. Also known by the epithet '*queen of the god*', Vac is the personification of the phenomenon of speech and oral communication. She gives the boon of hearing, speech and sight and she can lead a man to become a Brahman. She also personifies truth sustains soma — the liquid essence of vision and immortality. She is said to have created the four Vedas, the basis of the earliest Hindu mythology. Though she takes a prominent place in the *Rg Veda*, Vac largely disappears from later Hindu traditions. She may have became syncretized with the goddess of wisdom, Sarasvati. She is generally depicted as an elegant womanly figure dressed in gold, but in the secondary capacity of a mother goddess she is also drawn as a cow. 2. God. Buddhist. An emanation of Amitabha and a variety of Manjusri.

Vadali

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). An attendant of Marici. Attributes: flower, needle, noose and staff.

Vagisvara (*lord of speech*)

God of speech. Buddhist. The tutelary deity of Nepal. An emanation of all *dhyanibuddhas* (spiritual meditation buddhas) and a variety of Manjusri. Accompanied by a lion or seated upon a lion throne. Attribute: blue lotus.

Vahguru

Creator god. Sikh Worshipped in the Golden Temple of Amritsar, in northern India. He has no icons.

Vaimanika

Generic tile for a group of deities. Jain [India]. A class of gods said to be borne by, or living within, a flying palace, and vimana.

Vairocana (*coming from the sun*)

Origin Buddhist [India]. The first and oldest *dhyanibuddha* or meditation *buddha.*

Known period of worship circa 500 BC to present.

Synonyms Buddhaheruka.

Center(s) of cult pan-Asiatic. *Art references* metal and stone sculptuers, paintings,

Literary sources Sadhanamala and Tantric ritual texts.

One of five mystic spiritual counterparts of human *buddha* in Vajrayana Buddhism. A product of the Adibuddha whorepresents the branch of the Adibuddha who represents the branch of the cosmos concerned with bodily form. He originates from the white mantra syllable OM and lives in the zenith paradise. His icon is normally placed in the innermost part of a stupa or shrine. His Sakti is Vajradhatvisvari and he is normally accompanied by a lion or two dragons. Colour white. Attributes: three monkish robes and prayer wheel. He is also taken as a tutelary deity in Lamaism [Tibet] in which case his attributes include bell and prayer wheel. Emanations include chielfy Samantabhadra bt also Cunda, Grahamatrka, Mahasahasrapramardant, Marici, Namasangiti, Sitatapatra- Aparajita, Usnisavijaya and Vajravahi. See also Aksobhya, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi and Ratnasambhava.

Vairotya (*having an axe and a good*)

Goddess of learning. Jain [India]. One of sixteen *vidyadevi* headed by the goddess Sarasvati.

Vaisnavi

Mother goddess. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). Epic and Puranic). A Sakti of Visnu, also regarded as a form of Laksmi. In later Hinduism she became one of a group of mataras regarded as of evil intent. Also one of a group of eight astamataras. In another grouping one of nine navasaktis who, in southern India, rank higher than the saptamataras. Her vehicle is the hybrid beast Garuda. Attributes: child, club, conch, lotus and prayer wheel.

Vajracarcika

Goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). An emanation of Aksobhya, she stands upon a corpse. Colour: red. Attributes: cup, image of Aksobhya on the crown, jewel, lotus, skull with noose, staff and sword. Three-eyed.

Vajradaka

God. Buddhist (Mahayana). An emanation of Aksobhya bearing one, three or four heads.

Vajradhara

God. Buddhist. An epithet of the Adibuddha but also an allegory for the highest buddha. Known particularly from Nepal and Tibet. His Sakti is Prajnaparamita. Attributes: cup, hook, noose, regal ornaments and staff. Three-headed.

Vajradhatvisvari *(lady of the adamantine world)*

Goddess. Buddhist. The Sakti of Vairocana and also a variety of Marici. Attributes: many including an image of Vairocana on the crown.

Vajragandhari

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). Colour: blue or gold. Attributes: arrow. axe, bell, bow, hook, image of Amoghasiddhi, knife, noose, prayer wheel, staff, sword, and trident.

Vajragarbha (*substance of a thunderbolt*)

God. Buddhist (Vajrayana). A *bodhisattva* or buddha-designate.

Colour: blue.Attributes; blue lotus, book and staff.

Vajraghanta

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). A female dikpala or guardian of the northern direction. Colour: green or white. Attributes: staff with bell.

Vajramrta (*immortal of the Vajra sect*)

God. Buddhist (Mahanyana). An emanation of Amoghasiddhi His vehicle is an animal of uncertain identity. Colour: green. Attributes: beel, club, hook, prayer wheel, staff and sword.

Vajrapani

God. Buddhist [mainly Tibet]. An emanation of Aksobhya but also sometimes identified with Adibuddha. Generally thought to reflect the second *dhyanibuddha* or spiritual meditation *buddha.* Sometimes depicted with a peacock. Alternatively considered to be a counterpart of the Hindu god Indra. Colour: dark blue or white. Attributes: noose, snake and staff. Also Acala-Vajrapani; Acarya-Vajrapani.

Vajrapasi

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). A female dikpala or guardian of the southern direction. Colour: yellow: Attributes: staff with noose.

Vajraspha

Goddess. Buddhist. A female dikpala or guardian of the western direction. Attribute: staff.

Vajrasrnkhala (*personification*)

1. Minor goddess. Buddhist. One of the Mahayana deities said to be an emanation of Amoghasiddhi Some tests describe her as the Attributes: arrow, bow, cup, mage of Amoghasiddhi on the crown, mane, noose skin, and staff. Three-eyed and three-headed.

2. Goddess of learning. Jain. One of sixteen *vidvadevi* headed by the goddess Sarasvati.

Vajratara

Goddess Buddhist (Mahayana). Considered to be an emanation of all the *dhyanibuddhas* or spiritual meditation *buddhas*. Also identified as a emanation of Ratnasambhava or form of Bhrkuti. She stands upon a lotus. Colour: golden. Attributes: arrow, blue lotus, bow, conch, hook, images of the five *dhyanbuddhas* on the crown, noose and staff. Three-eyed.

Vajravarahi (*diamond sow*)

Goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana) and Lamaist [Tibet]. An emanation of vairocana and sometimes identified as the *Sakti* of Hevajra. In Lamaism she accompanies Vajradaka. She is depicted treading on a man. Colour; red. Attributes: principally club, cup, image of Vairocana on the crown and knife, but with an assortment of other attributes from time to time. Three-eyed and three-headed.

Vajravidarani (*tearing asunder*)

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). Attributes: arrows, banner, bow, hook, noose, shield, staff and sword. Five-headed.

Vajrayogini

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). She can sometimes be identified carrying her severed head in her hand. Colour: yellow. Attributes: club, cup, knife and staff. Three-eyed.

Vajrosnisa

God. Buddhist. Apparently connected with the guardian deities or dikpalas in the easterly direction. Colour: white. See also Padmantaka.

Valli

Goddess. Hindu. The second consort of Skanda, usually depicted standing to his right. In its original context the word Valli may mean 'earth'.

Vamana

Incarnation of the god Visnu. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). The fifth *avatara* of Visnu which appears as a dwarf, symbolizing the puny

state of mankind in the cosmos. According to legend, the god took the guise in order to trick Bali, a great-grandson of Hiranyakashipu (see Narasimha), whose prestige had begun to overshadow that of Indra. To restore a proper balance Vamana requested from Bali a plot of land three paces wide on which to meditate. Vishnu returned to his proper stature and claimed heaven and earlth in two steps. He declined to take the third which would have also claimed the underworld, but instead gave its rule to Bali. The dwarfish form bears two arms. Attributes: umbrella and water-pot.

Varaha (*boar*)

Incarnation of the god Vishnu. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). The third avatara of Vishnu, which appears as a boar. According to legend, he descends in this guise to the bottom of the primeval sea to rescue the earth, which has been removed there by a demon. He retrieves it in the shape of a girl. The avatara may be depicted in wholly animal form or as a human with a boar's head. Epithets include Adivaraha.

Varahi

Mother goddess. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). A *Sakti* who in later Hinduism becomes one of a group of *mataras* regarded as of evil intent. Also one of a group of eight *astamataras*. In another grouping, one of nine *navasaktis* who, in southern India, rank higher than the *saptamataras*. She sits upon a boar, buffalo or elephant. Attributes: boar's head, bow, club, cup, knife, noose, plough, sword and trident.

Varahmukhi (*having a boar's head*)

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana), An attendant of Marici, Attributes: arrow, bow, flower and staff.

Varali

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). An attendant on Marici. Colour: white. Attributes: flower, needle, noose and staff.

Varuna (*coverer*)

Origin Hindu (Vedic, Puranic and early Tamil) (India]. Major

guardian deity.

Known period of worship circa 1700 BC until present.

Synonyms none.

Centre (s) of cult throughout India but as a rain god in the south.

Art references sculptures and reliefs in metal and stone.

Literary sources Rg Veda. etc.

Varuna is one of the major Vedic gods, concerned with the secure operation of the world's systems and of water. Lord of the *asura* class of deities, he is thought to equate with the Persian deity Ahura Mazda. In later times, a *dikpala* or guardian of the western direction. He is also regarded and in aditya or sun god, the son of Kardama and consort of Gauri.

In southern India he is still worshipped during periods of drought, particularly in coastal regions where he is thought to live in trees.

In Vedic times his sacred animal was the ram. He rides upon a or or sea monster, or in a cheriot dawn by seven horses. Attributes conch, parasol. sacred thread, snake noose, trident and water jar with jewels. Pot-belliedand four-headed.

Vasantadevi

Goddess of spring. Buddhist-Lamaist [Tibet]. Particularly known from tibet. where she appears in the retinue of Sridevi. Her animal is a mule. Attributes: cup and sword

Vasita (*willpower*)

Generic title for a group of goddesses. Hindu. Twelve deities who personify the disciplines which result in spiritual regeneration.

Vasu (s) (*excellent*)

Generic tile for a group of gods. Hindu (Vedic). Eight deities attendant on the Vedic weather god India, comprising day, dawn, fire, moon, pole star, sun, water and wind, Generanly carrying a rosary and with a *Sakti.*

Vasudeva

God. Hindu. The princely father of Krishna and Balarama. Consorts include Devaki, Rohini, etc.

Vasudhara (*treasurer*)

1. Fertility goddess. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). The Sakti of Kuvera. 2. Goddess. Buddhist. A female bodhisatva or buddha-designate who is the Sakti of Vajrasattva and a form of Adsobhy a or Ratnasambhava. Colour: yellow. Attributes: book, ear of rice, images of Aksobhya and Ratnasambhava on the crown, parasol, pearl and water-jar with jewels.

Vasumatisri (*beautiful with on excellent mind*)

Minor goddess. Buddhist (Mahayana). An attendant of Vasudhara.

Vasusri (*beautiful one*)

Minor goddess Buddhist (Mahayana). An attendant of Vasudhara.

Vasya-tara (*the subjected Tara*)

Goddess. Buddhist(Mahayana). A emanation of Amoghasiddhi and considered to be indistinguishable from Arya-Tara. Colour: green. Attributes; blue lotus and image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown.

Vata

God of wind. Hindu (Vedic) and Persian [Iran]. The name appears in the Rg Veda as a deity of violent personality. According to Asvestan tradition the god of victory, Verethragan, appeared to Zarathustra in the guise of Vata.

Vayu (I) (*the wind*)

Origin Hindu [India]. God of the winds.

Known period of worship circa 1700 BC to present.

Synonyms Pavana.

Centre (s) of cult none specific.

Art references sculptures and carvings in metal and stone.

Literary sources the Vedic texts, including *Rg Veda.*

One of the most important deities of the Vedas. In later Hinduism he evolves into a dikpala or guardian of the north-western quarter. He is also depicted in some texts as a chariot-driver for the god Agni. Colour: dark blue. Attributes: arrow, hook, prayer wheel, staff and water-jar.

Vayu (2)

God. Buddhist. A *dikpala* guardian of the north-western quarter.

Vayukumara

God. Jain [India]. One of the groups under the general title of *bhvanavasi* (dwelling in places). Of youthful appearance.

Vedas and Upanishads

What is known under the generic name of the Vedas are the ancient most monuments of the Hindu religiophilosophic thought. They are also the oldest human documents. By dint of their profound wisdom, they could escape the ravages of time. They have withstood the acid test of time all these centuries, and today form an important part of the common heritage of mankind. They are a whole body of literature, and the earliest source of our knowledge about Hindu view and way of life. They are called "Srutis" revelations, orally transmitted to the seers by God himself. They were not composed or written down by the ancient seers and rishis. The Vedas are considered "Apaurusheya", that is, their authorship cannot be assigned to any prophet or human agency. They were breathed out by God and heard and envisioned by the ancient sages in the dim and pre-historic pas in India. Thus, they are impersonal spiritual knowledge, and wisdom received by the seers. They were not their authors individually or collectively, but were blessed with the divine inner audience from him. They received this esoteric knowledge of the Vedas in a state of mind which can be termed as a state of supra-normal conciousness. This non-authorship of the Vedas imparts them a peculiar universality of their own. Their being non-personal in composition also means that in a sense anybody who studies them, delves deep, and imbibes their spirit, is

their author.

These ancient most books of the Hindu lore and learning are four in number. They are the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. But they are generally spoken of as a "trayi", the triple vidya or the threefold knowledge. It is because the last one, that is, the Atharvaveda is referred to as the "Triple Eternal Vedas" (trayam brahm sanatanam). These four together form the foundation of Brahmanic or Hindu religiophilosophic systems and schools.

Broadly speaking, the Vedas consist of three parts, viz., Samhitas, Brahmanas and Aranyakas. The Upanishads are also their part, but they are treated scparately because of their high speculative contents. The Upanishads are also called the 'Vedanta'. The Samhita portion of the Vedas contains "mantras" or hymns and mark the earliest stage of the creation of the respective Vedas. A Samhita literally means a collection. They are a kind of sacred religious songs meant to be recited or sung in offering worship and sacrifice to various gods and goddesses. The Brahmanas, which are mostly in prose, describe how to perform various rites and rituals, and thus form together with the hymns, the books of karmakanda. The Brahmanas are actually the commentaries on the Samhitas. The Aranyakas, or the forest treatises deal with meditation, while the Upanishads deal with the highest spiritual knowledge. The Upanishads, which are in rhythmic prose, contain secret or esoteric knowledge of the supreme kind. The Upanishads, in fact, represent the florescence and fruition of the speculative philosophy and religious wisdom contained in the Vedas, and that is why they are also referred to as the Vedanta. In the Vedas the emphasis on rituals and prayer, and in the Upanishads the centre of gravity shifts on contemplation, Atmajnana or Self-knowledge, mysticism and morality. The word "Upanishad" literally signifies "setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit". The Brahmanas interpret and comment upon the Samhita texts of the Vedas, while the Upanishads interpret their philosophy. Thus, they are all harmonious and homogeneous.

The Vedic literature is in Sanskrit. The Rigveda is the oldest and

also the most important. The Rigveda Samhita contains 10,000 verses in the form of mantras or hymns. These bymns were orally transmitted from generation to generation in certain familes for a considerable long period before they were written down, and in this process they were subjected to many changes. The Rigvedic hymns belong to Hotar priests and were sung at the time of sacrifices. Samaveda belongs to the Udgatr priests and is meant to be chanted at the time of sacrifice; the term 'saman' means of melody, and designates a whole Ṡamhita of the Samaveda, because it is meterical. Except the 75 hymns found here, the rest are borrowed from the Rigveda. Of these 75 hymns, some are partly found in other Samhitas.

Yajurveda is the sacrificial prayer book of the Adhvaryu priests. It is composed in verse of different metres and also in prose. They represent the loftiest human sentiments that a man ever feel for his god or goddess. Many of its mantras have been taken from the Rigveda. Yajurveda is characterized by its division into two collection of texts. The first is called Krishna or Black Yajurveda. The second is known as Shukla or White Yajurveda. In the former the Samhita and Brahmana portions are confused, but in the latter Brahmana portion is collected separately in the Satpatha Brahmana.

The Atharvaveda also shares many hymns in common with Rigveda. It is comparatively of later date, but its many hymns are as old as the Samhita mantras of the Rigveda. Atharvaveda will ever remain one of the richest human heritages representing both the secular and the intellectual aspects of the ancient Hinduism. The term "atharvan" was associated from the earliest times with intellectualism. Many of the hymns of Atharvaveda are highly speculative. The three earlier Vedas represent mainly the aspects of ancient Hinduism dealing with the goal of man's life to come, and the Atharvaveda deals with the other aspect, that is, the life of man in this world. This Veda deals with man, his daily life, his safety from the enemy, destruction of the foe, polities, cures, curses, atonements and such other things. But at the same time Atharvaveda is intimately and deeply concerned with the question of the Absolute.

The Upanishads are great scientific works on metaphysics and ethics. In the words of R.D. Ranade, "They mark the transition from the Naturé-gods to Self, from the hymnology to reflection, from henotheistic polytheism to monotheistic mysticism. No longer is there any fear of the wrath of the personified gods; and so, they mark the transition from emotion and imagination of the Rigveda to thought and reason of the post-vedic period. Hence, the guardian of natural and moral order does not come from without, but springs from the Atman who is the synthesis of what is both outside and inside and who is veritably the ballast of nature."

But is does not mean that Upanishads mark a departure from the Vedas. They have their roots in the Vedas. Here we find those ideas in well-developed forms which were in the form of the seeds in the Vedas. Thus, the Upanishads mark the natural and logical growth of the Vedic thoughts. They are several, but only sixteen of these are recognised as authentic and authoritative. These are, Aitreya and Kaushitaki (Rigveda); Katha, Taittiriya, Kaivalya, Svetasvatra and Narayana (Black Yajurveda); Isa, Brihadaranyaka and Jabala (White Yajurveda). Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya and Nrisimhatapani belong to Atharvaveda. The Upanishads belong to different periods of Indian history, and the earliest of these are pre-Buddhistic, and are believed to have been composed between 1000 B.C. and 300 B.C. The Upanishads are called the Vedanta, not only because they come at the end of Vedas, but also because they mark the culmination and consummation of them. The Upanishads presuppose the Vedas, and the latter anticipate the Upanishads.

The Origins

When and how did the universe began? Whence did this phenomenal world originate? By what do beings live and on what established? These were the profound questions which engaged the minds of the ancient Hindu sages and seers. The Hindu seers of old were the first to penetrate the mystery of creation. The Vedic literature is the first scientific and recorded attempt to explain the evolution of the universe and life. These ancient texts underline the restlessness and stirrings of the human mind to discern a certain

meaning and essence of life and its relation with universe and its creator. The inner urge and the great driving force of the rishis made them explore the beginnings of the existence, when nothing existed, neither the sky, nor the earth, nor space in between, neither God nor gods, because then God was not yet God having created nothing. We find the Vedic rishi in Svetasvatra Upanishad enquire, "What is the cause? Brahman? Whence do we originate? By what do we live and on what established? Upheld by what in pleasure and in reverse live we our respective lives, O Brahman Knowers?" The same enquiry is repeated again and again in so many places. The Rigveda asks, "Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The gods are later than this world's production, who knows then whence it came first into being? And then doubtfully answers, "He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not".

The universe must have a beginning. In the beginning naught existed. It was all darkness enveloped in darkness, far and wide, nothing but absolute void, until one out of the void took birth. He became self aware and felt alone, and so desired to be many, wanted himself to be multiplied. He reflected and having reflected. He projected it, He entered into it, that very thing, and became the gross and the subtle. The Prasnopanishad explains the beginning of the evolution thus—

"The Pursha then first of all created Prana; for, Prana it is who is the inner Self of all the beings in the unniverse and the very support of the organs of sense and action of them all. He then produced the five elements as the material out of which the body was formed. First he produced the element for space (akasha) with its specific quality of sound: than out of akasha the wind, with its specific quality of touch in addition to the quality of sound, because of its being a product of; then out of wind, the element of fire with the specific quality of form and along with it the inherited qualities of sound and touch; then again, out of fire the element of water with its specific quality of flavour, along with the three earlier qualities of sound, touch and form; and finally out of water, the element of

earth and its specific quality of smell, along with the four qualities of the preceding elements, namely sound, touch, form and flour. And further, again, in order to make possible the acquisition of knowledge, and the doing of actions, He brought into being out of the elements and their qualities, the five senses of knowledge, as also the five organs of action. And in order that all this should be owned organs of action. And, in order that all this should be owned and possessed by a master, as if, he produced the inner sense or the mind."

This riddle of creation is again answered by means of the sacrifice of Purusha. The Rigveda explains that, "all creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths of eternal life in heaven. With three-fourths Purusha went up: onefourth of him again was here. Then he strode out of every side over what eats not and what eats. When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering. Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood. They balmed as victim on the grass Purusha born in earlier time. With him the Deities and all Sadhyas and Rishis sacrificed. From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of the air and animals both wild and tame. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth, Indra and Agni from his mouth were born and Vayu from his breath. From his navel came mid air; the sky was fashioned from his head; Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the worlds."

This cosmological question of creation, one of the most philosophical ones, comes to the foreground again and again, and the creator is named as Prajapati or Brahmanaspati, Vishvakarman or Hiranyagarbha or gods in general, but it is emphasized again and again that all plurality is apparent not real. The reality is one, but is called by many names by the sages. When the question "What God shall we adore with our oblation?" is raised repeatedly, the answer is one alone, the Creator Prajapati, who holdeth up this heaven and earth, whose commandments all the gods acknowledge, the lord of the whole world of that breathes and slumbers, the God of gods, the universal germ.

The problem of creation and evolution occurs in the Brahmanas, in the Upanishads and again in the Gita and the Puranas, for example, in the Satpatha Brahmana we find that in the beginning Prajapati tortured and mortified himself in penance and created beings, and men out of his mind. Because men was created out of his mind, and mind being the most vital organ, man is the first and foremost of the beings. In other creation-legends the existence begins with primeval water or with the Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate cause of creation. From him all things are born, through him they live and finally into him they return and merge in. He is one without second and integral to the world of phenomena. From him the universe has come forth as threads from the spider. Thus, Vedic rishis were concerned not only with evolution but also with involution. In this respect these rishis are still ahead of the modern scientists. The involution or dissolution of the universe is in the inverse order. In dissolution each succeeding elements dissolve into its cause. Ultimately the universe is dissolved in the Purusha him-self. And just as the rivers which run into the sea lose their names and forms, and there remains one sea only, even so all things have no other destination except the Purusha, the only one omniscient Being in whom they all merge and lose their names and forms. What then remains is the eternal, immortal, timeless, Purusha, the Brahman. The universe has emanated from Brahman, a positive entity and ultimately returns to him. Herein we have the genesis of the theory of evolution and involution.

The Mundakya Upanishad declares that "As a spider projects and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on earth or hair comes on a living person, so does this universe here proceed from the immutable". The creation and dissolution of the universe is an eternal lila, a play of the Brahman. When we speak of the beginning of the universe, we actually speak of the beginning of a cycle (kalpa). In this sense the Vedas declare the origin of the universe beginningless, because its origin cannot be traced.

Again in Kathopanishad this process of creation and dissolution is described beautifully. The Lord of Death, Yama tells Nachiketa, a great seeker of the truth, "Wonderful is this tree of wordly existence which has its roots upwards in the form of Brahman, and

which, though it might not last even till the dawn of tommorrow and is therefore, known as the 'Asvatha' (not tomorrow lasting, and which also means the Pippala tree). The root being verily the Brahman, is the support and the sustenance of all the worlds. None can ever transgress its command."

"It comes out of Brahman, in it is sustained and in Brahman again it is dissolved. It is due to the fear of the Brahman that all the activities in the universè are going on smoothly, and without there being any exception or delay of even a single minute. It is through the fear of Brahman that fire burns, the sun shines, Indra rules over the gods, and wind and the Lord of Death are in great haste to perform their respective duties."

"He is within all beings and without-

Motionless, yet still moving, not discerned

For subtlety of instant presence; close

To all, to each; yet measurelessly far;

Not manifold, and yet subsisting still

In all which lives.

The light of lights, he is in the heart of dark

Shining eternally,"

This process of creation and dissolution or pralaya goes on ceaselessly. Evolution and involution occur alternately as part of the lila of the Brahman. In Atharvaveda, Brahman as a Cosmic Pillar or Skambha is described as the source and support of all creation. It is this Cosmic Pillar which holds all things together. It is the source from which spring both being and non- being. The repeated query of this mantra, is, "What is Skambha? From which of his parts do the Fire, the Wind, the Moon, the Sun, the Earth and the Sky come forth? What is that support which sstains the days, nights, the world and all the forms of life? And how much of himself is there in the Skambha? By how much will be into the future? That one limb he made thousand-fold, by how much of himself did he enter the Skambha? On whom the earth, the sky and

the air are firmly set, on whom the fire, the moon, the sun and the wind are firmly founded, each knowing his place? Tell me of that Skambha—who for sooth is he? In whose one limb all the thirty-three gods are set together, tell me of that Skambha, who may he be?''

And then in reply the sages say that they who know this divine Prusha, know the Supreme Being, the Lord of life, the Support and frame of all creation, him, out of whose body were created the verses, formuulas from his shavings, songs from his hairs. He alone holds the Adityas, Rudras, Vasus, and the rest of the three and thirty gods together, whose eyes are the sun and the moon, mouth the fire, breath the wind. "A great wonder amidst creation strode in penance on the surface of the sea. In him are set whatever gods there are, like the branches of a tree round the trunk. Unto him the gods continually render tribute unmeasured in a well-measured place of sacrifice with their hands and feet, speech with hearing and with sight. He who knows the Reed of gold standing in the sea, is truly the mysterious Prajapati.''

This theme of creation and dissolution recur in the Gita and the Puranas in great detail as the Brahman's eternal lila. In the Gita the same basic principles of evolution underline the process of creation. It is He who manifests himself in and through the whole of the universe, each being reflecting a portion of his splendour. He is the beginning and the end, and also the in- between. "I am the origin of all; from me all things evolve. The wise know this and adore Me with all their heart...I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings... whatever being there is, know that to have sprung from a spark of My splendour. I stand supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Myself.''

Brahman and Atman

The question of Brahman or ultimate Reality, and its relation to Atman or individual Soul, is fundamental to Hindu religious thinking. Brahman of the Hindus is both the personal God and the impersonal Reality, and they are not incompatible. This view of God, in both his aspects, underlines the principle of "from the

familiar and from concrete to abstract''. It represents a sublime synthesis of personal and impersonal, gross and subtle, microcasm and macrocasm, saguna and nirguna. The paths to the transcendental Reality pass through many stages. Paths may be different, but they all converge on the same one point of Reality.

Brahman is both immanent and transcendant. That is why he has been described in opposing terms and contradictory language. Brahman, in his saguna aspect, as a personal Deity, is the lord of all, omniscient, the cause of all. From him all beings originate and ultimately in him they merge. He is the ruler of the universe; he projects it, maintains it, and dissolves it at the end of the cosmic sycle. As Ishvara, he is the sum total of all the bodies in the universe, and the aggregate of the the minds. In the Rigveda, as Aditi, the boundless, infinite and indivisible, she is mother of all the gods. God is imagined here as one, immanent, indivisible Reality, the proginitor of the gods and the phenomenal world, ''Aditi is the heaven, Aditi is mid- air, Aditi is the mother and the Sire and Son. Aditi is all gods, Aditi is five-classed men, Aditi is all that hath been born and shall be born.''

The cosmic view of Reality holds God as saguna, the bearer of attributes. In the Purusha-shukta of the Rigveda, he is described as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet and pervading the entire universe. It declares that all beings are only a fourth of the Reality and that God and man are inseparable, and the Supreme spirit as a Purusha or Cosmic Man involves inter-relationship.

''A thousand heads hath Purusha,

a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.

On every side pervading earth

He fills a space ten fingers wide.

This Purusha is all that yet hath been

and all that is to be;

the Lord of immortality which

Waxes greater still by food.

So mighty is his greatness;

Yea, greater than this is Purusha.

All creatures are one-fourth of him,

three-fourths eternal life in heaven.

With three-fourths Purusha went up,

one-fourth of him again was here.

Thence he strode out every side

over what eats not and what eats."

In the Upanishads he is both personal (saguna) and impersonal (nirguna). He is within and without, moving and unmobing. He is the ultimate Reality and cannot be described even by pairs of opposites. The Vedic bards are compelled to describe it in a dual manner. Brahma is the sole Reality, and yet there is a place for multitued of gods, goddesses and the phenomenal world as its manifestation. The theory of immanence holds God and the universe identical. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul are also identical in essence. Brahman is the foundation of all the manifestation. By knowing Brahman one becomes Brahman. The diversity of the phenomenal world and its identity with the Absolute is declared at many places in the Upanishads. From him has this universe come and to him it will return. He created it out of himself and then entered it. But this "entrance" is not to be taken literally. He does not enter like a builder, who builds a house and then enters it. He is there in all the living beings and yet he is one and undivided, immanent, all-pervasive and yet transcendent.

Brahman is the cause of all this manifestation. Just as gold can be shaped into various forms without any change into its fundamental nature, even so, Reality can manifest itsefl in diverse shapes and forms of various splendour and grandeur and yet remain the same. The different manifestiations of the Divine are real but they cannot exist without the prior existence of That. In the words of Mundakopanishad, "Brahman has caused the show of the creation

of the vast universe, which is very helpful to have some idea of the limitles magnitude, glory and the resplendent nature of the transcendent, uncontaminated, and impersonal Being. Fire is the form of him; heaven is his head; the sun and the moon are his eyes; the quarters his ears; the Vedas his speech; the wind his prana; the whole world his heart; the earth his feet. He is the infinite God, known as Vishnu, the inner Atman of all beings. From him is born the Sun, who is merely burning fuel in that great Fire; from him come forth the rains which produce herbs, and corn and valour in men and women from whom are born the various peoples". Brahman is Sat, Chit and Ananda, that is, He is absolute existence or being, absolute consciousness and absolute bliss.

Brahman being the sole Reality, the plurality of the world is unreal, and the result of avidya, maya or nescience. It is this nescience which is at the root of the experience of plurality. The Absolute is in no way affected and altered by the phenomenal world. The immutable Reality is ever the same. The Absolute is beyond phenomenal world of names and forms. The world changes and passes but the One remains. The acosmic doctrine regards the Absolute as nirguna, attributeless and distinctionless. Its approach is negative and it declares that Brahman never became the universe, and the phenomental show is only an appearce. It states that senseperceptions like touch, sound, smell, colour, taste and spatial-temporal qualities, like beginning and end, above and below, right and left, do not apply to the Absolute. The theory of the universe coming out of the Brahman is not a reality. God cannot be characterized as "this" or "that". An oft quoted passage of Madukya Upanishad says, "Not internally conscious, not conscious otherwise, not a mass of consciousness, not conscious, not non-conscious, imperceptible, not amenable to impirical usage, ungraspable, the essence of the knowledge of the one Self, that into which all phenomenon get resolved, that which is non-dual bliss, such they hold, is transcendent Reality."

They hold that the Absolute can be indicated only as "not this, not that". In Brihadaranykopanishad the sage Yajnavalkya says that Brahman cannot be defined by empirical categories. "It is not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, not red,not adhesive, without

shadow, without darkness, without air, without space, without attachment, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without light, wighout breath, without mouth, without measure, and without either inside or outside. It does not eat anything, nor is it eaten by anybody." He is one without second, non-dual, where all empirical usages become meaningless and futile.

In his impersonal, nirguna aspect, Brahman is the eternal witness. He is negation of all attributes. God is the subtlest and most transcendent, He is beyond senseperception and is not caused by anything except himself. Bereft of attributes he is eternally one and yet becomes many. "For, in him alone, like spokes in a wheel, all the things in the Universe, this earth, the sky, and the intermediary space, the mind, the prana, and the veins, and the arteries are fixed". The concept of non-duality is reached by successive stages and abstractions. The Upanishads were wary not to carry all to the nirguna or attributeless Absolute, irrespective of their mental capacity and spiritual progress. There are various ways for realization for people in various stages of life. They begin with the familiar things. To reach the Supreme Reality one has to pass through many stages and planes. For example, there are personal deities, their cosmic counterparts, than the immanent Brahman with its attributes, and then finally the transcendent Reality, the nirguna or nirupadhika Brahman. Thus, there is no contradiction. Because of nescience the one and the same Reality appears as different and many due to the upadhis or adjuncts. The very idea of plurality is like a dream in which one sees oneself as many. As soon as the dream vanishes, there remains, himself, the only reality in it. The clay deer is not the clay lion, but when dissolved both become clay again. The differnces are mere in name and form, not in essence. What is true of Brahman is also true of individual souls declares the Chandogya Upanishad, "Just as my dear, by one piece of clay everything of clay may be known, the modification is merely a verbal distinction, a name, the reality is just clay".

God, both in his aspects, as saguna and nirguna, is real and essential for the spiritual progress. Both the aspects show that Brahman is the cause and the universe the effect, and that we

should concentrate on the cause so that we may be identified with it. That is why Brahman is described both as personal and impersonal, saguna and nirguna, dynamic and static, sopadhika and nirupadhika. But the attributes and Upadhis are mutable, in the sense that they are dependent for their existence on the immutable and nirupahdhika Reality. As long as we consider ourselves as embodied beings, we are persons and have personal gods, but when we realize that not only we are Brahman, but the whole creation is Brahman, we transcend all such personal barriers and merge into universal consciousness of transcendence. Then remains only impersonal Reality of the attributeless Absolute.

The Sagunopsana or devotion to the personal God, is a potent means in the ultimate realization of the impersonal Reality. In the ultimate analysis, the Reality is nirguna, changeless and immutable. To reach this highest Reality, one has to pass through lesser indentities of personal deities and grosser, subtler and then to the most subtle. The immence shows the path to transcendence. This synthesis of personal and impersonal aspects of God is expressed in more concrete form in the Bhagvad Gita. Here the immanent and transcendent view-points are beautifully harmonized and reconciled. Here Krishna is presented as personalization of the Upanishadic impersonal Reality, and he is being described in the same language that has been in the Upanishads to describe the impersonal and immutable Brahman. It is in this context of the cosmic and personal God that devotion, surrender, worship and allegiance become relevant.

God is present in every being, but more so in a person who is awakened, enlightened and godly. That is why it is aid that the knower of Brahman is Brahman itself. It is the presence of the virtues that make a man divine, righteous, godly or godlike. One is god himself when godliness is fully manifested through oneself. This marks the only difference between a man and an amoeba, otherwise they stand on the same plane. The avatars of Rama and Krishna are regarded the incarnation of God or ultimate Reality, only because the divinity has found in them the greatest and fullest possible expression. In the Gita Lord Krishna says, "I am the Self, O Gudakesha, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning,

the middle and also the end of all beings. of the Adityas I am Vishnu; of the luminaries, the radiant Sun; I am Marichi of the Maruts; of the astrisms the Moon am I. Of the Vedas I am Saman; I am Vasava among the Devas; of the senses I am the mind and among the living beings I am conciousness; of beasts I am the lord of beasts, and Vainateya of birds. Of the wielders of weapon I am Rama."

God is in everything, but more so in one person than another in proportion to the manifiestation of his glories and divinity. Krishna as incarnation of God is friend to all beings including the Kaurvas, but more so to Arjuna, because through him divinity finds fuller and better expression, because the Pandavas are virtuous and righteous while Kauravas are not.

The Vedas, the Upanishads and later religious literature of the Hindus are never dogmatic about the relation of the Brahman and the individual Atman. At some places the individual soul is treated as a different entity, but in most of the Hindu religious literature, the identiy of both is declared categorically. There may be a difference of opinion on this point, but they are unanimous about the close and abiding relationship between the two, though this relationship is quite subbtle and mysterious. They also declare in unison that it is not the body, the senses, the intellect, or the mind which is of supreme importance, but the soul, which is eternal, self-existent, timeless and independent of body. The soul in essence is ever the same and changeless. It is the body which evolves and changes. That is why it is said there is a world of difference between an amoeba and a Buddha on the level of the body, but none whatsoever on the spiritual plane because the same spirit pervades the both, though the degree of the manifestation differs. In Buddha we find the expression of the essence far more greater than in and through an amoeba, like the same water contained in the ocean and a cup.

The Upanishads accept and declare the oneness of Atman, that impersonal Reality and the personal soul are is essence identical. Their diversity is apparent but not real. Their essential oneness is sublimely expressed in the following passage from the

Mundakapanishad:

"Two birds, inseparable companions—

In the same tree dwell.

Of the two one eats the sweet fruits,

Uneating the other looks on.

Upon the same tree the soul, overhelmed,

Grieves at its impotence, bewildered.

When it percieves the Other the infinite Being,

And His splendour, he is freed from grief."

Atman is cosmic breath, not an individual entity, yours and mine, ·but universal, beyond senses, intellect and mind, which can be best experienced in deep yogic state of being. The word Atman means soul of the individual and the soul of the universe or cosmos. It is the most subtle, the most transcend and imperceivable by the senses. Atman or soul is self-effulgent and existent, and the senses. depend on it for their existence as well as perception. The senses borrow the power of conception only from the soul. Atman is not altered or affected by what appears on it, just as the rope, the shell and the sky appear respectively to be serpent, a silver and a coloured expanse, even so the soul appears to be different on account of the superimposition of the upadhis or adjuncts and attributes, not its own.

Atman is fundamentally changeless, one, non-dual and all-pervading as the bubbles, the foam and the waves are nothing else but water, or the ornaments are nothing else but gold, and the pitchers nothing else but the earth though they may be of various forms, sizes and names. The name and the form can never alter the essence of the soul.

The soul is of the nature of consciousness, and all that comes into existence is nothing else but Atman. The individual soul transmigrates in various ways on different planes of existence. The oneness of the soul, the gods and the Supreme Soul is very well expressed in many well-known hymns and passages, for example,

in this hymn of the Rigveda:

"He is the Sun dwelling in the heavens,

the Vayu dwelling in the mid-region,

the priest beside the sacrificial altar.

He is guest in the house, consciousness

in men, the dweller in the noblest

place, dweller in the cosmic order,

born of flood, in the rays of the Sun.

The truth itself."

The existence of universe is based on the identity of the individual soul and the Universal Soul. God is Purusha, and so is man. They both are Purusha in embodied form, and freed from this manifestation they become impersenal and nirguna Reality. Being most subtle it is described in its negative and positive aspects even in the same hymn. The opposite and self-contradictory terms used in describing Atamn shows its indescribleness. In the Chandogya Upanishad Atman is described thus—"This soul of mine within the heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley corn, or a mustard seed, or a grain of millet...this soul of mine within the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than these worlds". The same thread of Atman runs through and binds together all the beings. The same Atman is manifested through various beings, but prominently so in those beings who are good, godly and beautiful. The immortality of the soul is emphasized in this passage of the Gita-

"The wise grieve not either for

the living or for the dead.

Never was there a time,

when I was not, nor you,

nor any of these princes,

nor is it we shall cease to be in

the future.

The unreal has no existence.

The Real never ceases to be.

The truth about both has

been realized by the seers.

In the Kathopanishad we find Yama, the Lord of Death teaching the young Nachiketas the nature of Atman and the method of its realization. Nachiketas was yet a boy of sixteen; his father Vajsravas performed a sacrifice and gave away in charity to the priests and the Brahmans even such cows which were old, weak, dry and useless. It made Nachiketas sad. He wanted to offer himself in dakshina to undo the wrongful charity of his father and to avoid the possible future misery and punishment to his father. He made up his mind to save his father even at the cost of his won life, and asked Vajsravas thrice to whom he was to go. Twice he did not get any reply, but the third time the father got angry and said, "Go to hell". The boy went to house of Death. Nachiketas remained unattended for three days at the gate of Yama, because the latter was not present there. To atone for this lapse, Yama offered him three boons, and the boy asked Yama as a third favour to be enlightened if after the death of a man there still remained or not the Atman, who is said to be different from the mind, senses and the intellect. Yama tried to dissuade him by offering limitless riches, progeny, kingdom and such other things, but the boy, without being tempted by these attractions, insisted on his boon. And then Yama, finding him a fit and worthy disciple, instructed him in Brahm-vedya or the knowledge of the Self.

"Notwithstanding the bodies being many, there is one universal Atman who is all pervading and immanent in all....He is at once one and all-pervading...He dwells in the city of the human body. The Atman who can never be menable to any change, who, being bereft of birth and death, always remains uncontaminated, and as equal to all like the Sun. He does not perish when the body is destroyed. He is beyond the senses and their obects, beyond mind and intellect. Man lives by the presence of Atman on whom depend

the senses, the mind and the intellect for their very existence. The Atman alone is the independent element of consciousness and life. Know this Atman ever awake even while the Pranas and senses go to sleep. Know him to be ever pure, impershable Brahman which is the source and support of all. Just as fire transforms the wood into fire, and assmes itself the shape of the burnt wood even so, the invisible Atman, who is the inner Self of all, becomes manifest and transforms a being into a prototype of himself and assumes for himself the personality and the embodied nature of the devotee, and yet remains as the only transcendent Reality of all.''

But the individual sheathed in a body forgets its real nature and identity, and begins to regard itself as a separate soul. Imprisoned in a body, the individual soul feels itself separated and estranged from the Supreme Soul because ofnescience. By knowing that there is falling of all fetters, the cessation of the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, the highest object of life should be to aim this identification and union with the Brahman. This can be attained only through knowledge and giving up of all works, good as well as evil, for even good actions lead to new births and rebirths. As no water remains attached to the lotus bloom, so no deeds cleave to him who knows Atman. The Bhagvad Gita declares in the same strain—

''He who holds Atman as slayer

and he who regards It as the slain

Both of them are ignorant.

It slays not, nor is It slain.

The Atman is neither born,

nor does It die. Coming into being

and ceasing do not take place in It.

Unborn, eternal, constant and ancient

It does not die when the body is slain.

Seek to perform your dharma,

but seek not its fruits.

Be ye not the producer of

the fruits of karma nor lean towards inaction.

Perform action, O Dhananjaya, being

fixed in yoga, renouncing attachments,

and even-minded in success

and failure: equilibrium is very yoga.

The wise imbued with equanimity

of mind, renouncing the fruits

of their actions, freed from the fetters

of births, verily go to the stainless state.''

In the Brihadarankya Upanishad rishi Yajnavalkya, being questioned, tells on many occasions that Atman, like salt in water, is immanent, all-pervading, and all things exist for Atman. Atman is the dearest of all, and all things are dear for the sake of the Atman. The Atman is the most precious, dearer than son, wealth and dearer than all else. Therefore, one should meditate on Atman alone for he is only deathless and contemplation on him leads to liberation through dissolution of all desires and actions and the fruits thereof. He who realizes the Atman knowing, ''I am He'', his pranas do not migrate, they become merged in him, and so there is no return for him Liberation consists in the realization of the unity of the soul with the Universl Soul.

Liberation or Moksha

Moksha or liberation is the highest goal and ideal of Hindu life. The three other ideals. viz., dharma, artha and karma are secondary, and a means to the summum bonum of the Hindu life, i.e., Moksha or salvation. All the systems and schools of the Hinduism decisively and unanimously declare that moksha, the final liberation, is the loftiest and the ultimate goal of human life. According to one's karma (actions) a person is reborn as a particular person. This chain of births and deaths goes on

ceaselessly till one obtains moksha by following his dharma dutifully, and through the self-realization. Man is happy or sad according to his past actions. Life is an opportunity for man's spiritual growth and evolution, and the attainment of the ultimate ideal of moksha is the state of identification of the individual soul with the Brahman. It means release from the slavery of the senses and mind. Essentially it is a state of bliss and peace and liberation from the limitations of the phenomenal world. But it never means nothingness or an eternal life of pleasures in heaven.

A jivanmukta, is a person who has already achieved liberation in life itself. He is freed from desires; atman is his only desire. Such a man is Brahman and goes to Brahman. He achieves immortality in his very life and realizes the Brahman. There have been many such realized souls in India. Oneness and identity with Brahman is immortality, conquest of death and moksha. Plurality is death. This idea is beautifully expressed in the following four lines from Kathopanishad:

"Wherever he is known, there is truth;
wherever not known, destruction.
Seeing him in every being.
the sages, departing from here, become immortal."

Moksha is liberation; it is imortality, supreme bliss and eternal peace. Bondage, confinement within limited body, space and time is really death. It is a freedom from limitations, the four walls of physical existence. The Hindu idea of moksha can be seen in the following prayer of Brihadarankya Upanishad:

O Thou that are manifest, be Thou manifest to me.
From the unreal lead me to light,
From death lead me to Immortality.

Thus, moksha is a state of perfection and utmost fulfilment. It is immortality and cessation of birth and death, and the accompanying duality. It cannot be termed as dissolution or destruction of the individual self. It is a state of transcendence and perfection. In the words of Mundaka Upanishad, moksha is "just like the merging of the rivers into the sea, where they lose their

name and form. Similarly, the wise, freed from name and form attain the supreme Reality." In Rigveda also we find the same prayer of moksha and immoratality. "Just as cucumber is removed from its stalk, so from the bondage of Death may I be removed, but not from immortality."

Pointing the path to moksha Kaivalya Upanishad says:-

"He is all, what has been and what shall be,
Having realized him, one overcomes eternal death.
No other path leads to liberation.
When he sees the atman dwelling in all beings
and all beings within the atman, he departs
to the supreme Brahman. There is no other way."

It is the pathway of yoga, which leads an aspirant to final release. Our embodied individual existence is the root of sufferings and death. It is a kind of imprisonment, and the relization of life as one indivisible organic whole, is the only solution of the problem. Before one attains liberation, it is essential that one overcomes the barriers of individual existence, separation and exclusiverness. The final release from the bondage of mundance existence comes only when one realizes the essential unity and divinity of life and atman:

"Only in oneness is to be seen,
the eternal atman, immeasurable
Free from stain is it, beyond space,
unborn, great, unwavering."

The Bhagvad Gita underlines how the performance of actions, without attachment to their fruits, can pave the path to salvation. This is the fundamental message of the Gita. Man cannot live without doing actions, bt their fruits ought to be surrendered at the feet of the Lord. It makes a deed devoid cf desire or nishkama.

Liberation and release is the enlightened state, it's the attainment of the desired relationship with the Reality. Such an enlightenment requires long and arduous training and practice. It involves a lot of study, reflection, contempation and realization, preferably under a competent guru. This is the path of yoga. The aim of yoga and accompanying meditation is the realization of the truth by drawing

mind from all other things and pinpointing it on the truth. Such a course leads to the direct experience of identity of the soul with the Brahman, and unity of all existence amidst diversity of menifestation. Moksha is a state when all plurality and exclusiveness disappear and all inclusive reality is experienced which is full of absolute peace, bliss and harmony. It is a condition of moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection, and fulfilment, in which all distinctions disappear.

"Where one does not see another, or hear another, or know another, that is fulness. But where one sees another, hears another, knows another, that is limitation. That which is fullness is immortal; but which is limited is mortal." Such a state is attainable in this very life. This is what the Hinduism preaches and urges the aspirants to achieve. Moksha is not hereafter, it is here. Its achievement makes one jivanmukta, a liberated man while still living. There have been many jivanmuktas in ancient and in modern times in Inida. They meditated on the Self, realised it and became Brahma themselves while still living. King Janaka or Mithila, the father of Sita was one of such jivanmuktas. He became Brahman itself. The great sage Yajanavalkya was his priest and adviser. It is said that they both prepared the way for Buddha. The ignorance or nescience is at the root of bondage. When forgetting our true identity with the Brahman, we begin to identify ourselves eith the bodies and its senses and their desires, we are in deep bondage. Our desires, and the actions done to satisfy them, chain the soul. Birth and rebirth are due to desires and the accompanying karma. Hinduism aims at removing the causes which constitute bondage. Moksha is not a post-mortem ideal to be experienced hereafter in the next world. It is to be obtained and experienced here and now. Moksha is the very nature of the soul, and not something to be achieved after death. What prevents the soul from realizing this greatest ideal is avidya or ignorance. As soon as the avidya is dissolved, one becomes videha or jivanmukta.

"When man's desires are dissolved
Whichchain his soul, then he
even here becomes immortal, realizing Brahman."

The Vedic and Upanishadic seers underline the desirability of libration here and now, but it never means that if one fails to obtain enlightenment in this birth can never do so. They firmly believe that every man is bound ultimately to possess this state of supreme bliss and peace. There is no room for despair and hopelessness. The underlying message of hope and cheer, moksha and fulfilment provides enough protection against pessimism. Hinduism is the pathway of inspiring faith, confidence are robust optimism. Those who follow the life of dharma and righteousness, though may not attain final liberation in this life, because of some want in respect of efforts and self-control, they are sure to achieve it in stages, and sooner than later. The Hindu sages believe that bliss is the basis of all existence. Ananda is an inherent quality of the Atman, and so there is no need to be depressed by looking at the seamy side of life.

Monotheism and Monism

The Vedas and the Upanishads preach and propagate neither pantheism nor polytheism but monotheism and monism. There are many gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Mitra, Yama, Brahma, etc., but they represent the different aspects of the same Reality and share some common features and powers. The spirity that pervades these gods is the same. Though One, He is called by many names, such as Indra, or Agni or Mitra. "What is one, the sages call by many names". These gods are lauded and praised in their respective hymns, and it may give the impression that the Vedas advocate pantheism and polytheism, but gradually the idea of one Supreme God crystalizes, and he is seen as the common source of the existence and power of all these gods. For example, Prajapati, the lord of creatures is lauded in some particular hymns as the highest godhead, representing the creative aspect of the supreme Brahman, but later on, when he ceases to represent that aspect of God, he is reduced to the secondary position. Thus, it is clear that reality is one Brahman which is also all- pervading Atman. There are several hymns and passages in the Vedas which may appear as polytheistic, but then the omnipresence and omnipotence of the supreme Brahman stressed and underlined explicity, remove this impression, for example, take this hymn from the Rigveda:

"This was not non-existent nor existent;
there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.
What covered in, and where? And what gave shelter?
Wast water there, Unfathomed depth of water?
Death was not then, nor was there immortal;
no sign was there, aught days and night's divider,
That one Thing, breathless, breathed by
its own nature: apart from it was
nothing whatsoever.
All that existed then was void and formless;
By the great power of Warmth was born the unit."

In these sacred books we find monism and monotheism embracing each other. There are many passages where the ulltimate Reality is represented as immanent while in numerous others as transcendent. The elements of monotheism blend with that of monism so well that sometimes it is difficult to say which is which. But in the Upanishads the trend of monism is more pronounced and consipcuous. The monism doctrine of the Upanishads admits no other reality except Braham or Atman. Brahma, the all-inclusive first cause of the universe, and that which is the essence of man, are one and the same. They stress that by knowing Brahman all will be known. Brahman as the cosmic principle is the basis of all the individual souls as well as of the whole of the universe. Thus, Upanishads are more monisitc and absolutistic than the Vedas. Monism concieves Brahman as the only efficient cause of all existence, while Monotheism represents the personal form of Brahman. But in actuality they are complimentary to each and there is hardly any conflict and contradiction. Brahm in its nirguna and impersonal aspect is one, but as sould and the universe, Braham becomes many. The latter are also real in the sense that they emerge from Brahma. But ultimately Brahman is the sole reality, the ground and goal of Vedic and Upanishadic teaching. The later Vedantic definition of absolute Reality as Sacchidananda is foreshadowed in the Upanishads. And that famous hymn of Rigveda (X, 129) in which Reality is addressed as "That One" (Tad Ekam), foreshadows the impersonal Brahman of the panishads. This One, the only One, is both personal and

impersonal, immanent and transcendent, and they enrich and make each other more meaningful. In the present context the following verses may be quoted:

"The sages call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna,
Agni, and he is divine nobly winged Garutman.
To that is One, they give various names,
They call It Agni, Yama, Matarisvan."

(Rigveda I.164.46)

"Its root is above its branches below;
This eternal pipal tree
That indeed is the pure, that is Brahman
That indeed is called the Immortal;
On that do all the worlds rest;
And no one so-ever goes beyond it
This truly is that."

(Katha Upanishad VI.I)

"As a spider might issue forth with its thread,
as small sparks come forth from the fire,
even so from this Soul issue forth
all energies, all worlds and beings."

(Brihada 1.20)

"Not by speech, not by mind
Not by sight can He be apprehended
How can He be apprehended
Otherwise than by one's saying
"He is".

(Kathopanishad VI. 12)

"He who thinks himself different
from God, the Lord of all,
goes along with the wheel of Brahman,
which is both the source and dissolution of
all creatures. When the mortal man
with right knowledge can realize
his own identity with Brahman

he enjoy the eternal ananda
even in this very life."

(Svetashvataropanishad 16)

"In the beginning this world was merely non-being. It became existent; it developed. It turned into an egg. It lay for a year before it was split asunder."

(Chandogya Upanishad III.9.1)

"There are assuredly two forms of Brahma: Time and the timeless. That which is prior to the sun is Timeless, without parts. But that which begins with the sun is Time, which has parts."

(Maitri Upanishad VI.15)

Venda

Creator god. Dravidian (Tamil) [southern India]. An ancient vegetation deity. Worshipped in villages on the plains, throught to live in trees and equated with Indra.

Venkata

Form of the god Visnu. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). According to the *Aditya Purana*, Venkata is a deity-of considerable importance in southern India. The name does not occur in the north. He is worshipped extensively by Hindus but particularly in the Tamil shrine of Tirupati where there is argument that the deity depicted is Siva or Karttikeya. The image appears to carry attributes of Visnu on the left and Siva on the right. Also Venkatesa.

Vidyadevi

Generic title for a group of goddesses. Jain [India]. Sixteen deities led by Sarasvati who are associated with knowledge or learning.

Vidyesvara

Generic tile for a group of deities. Hindu. Eight liberated or emancipated 'beings' who are considered to be aspects of Siva.

Vidyraja

Tutelary god. Buddhist (Mahayana). One of several deities who are

concerned with the implementation of the law.

Vidyujjbalakarili (tongues of five)

Goddess. Buddhist. A twelve-headed form of Akajata who is said to have been formed in the Buddha's sweat. She is often depicted trampling the four Hindu deities Brahma, Indra, Siva and Vishnu. Colour: blue or black. Attributes: many and varied.

Vidyutkumara

God. Jain [India]. Belonging to one of the groups under the general title of *bhvanavasi* (dwelling in places). Of youthful appearance.

Vighnantaka (*remover of obstacles*)

God. Buddhist (Mahayana). An emanation of Aksobhya who may equate with the Hindu god Ganesa. Colour: blue. He is also seen as a dikpala or guardian of the northerly direction, in which case his colour is green. Attributes: cup, drum, hook, knife, noose and staff. Three-headed. Also Analarka.

Vijaya (*victory*)

God. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). An *ekadasarudra* (one of the eleven Rudra deities). Hira) aksa is considered one of his incarnations. Attributes. club, knife, rosary and staff. Vijaya is also the name of the bow of Indra.

Vikalaratri (*twilight night*)

Minor goddess Buddhist (Mahayana). An attendant of Buddhakapala.

Vimala (*stainless*)

Minor goddess. buddhist (Vajrayana). One of several deified *bhumis* recognized as different spiritual spheres through which a disciple passes. Colour: white. Attributes: lotus and staff.

Vina

Goddess of music. Buddhist. The personification of a lute. Colour: yellow. Attribute: a lute.

Vindhya

Mountain god. Hindu. Personification of the hills forming the northern edge of the Deccan area of central India.

Virabhadra (*great hero*)

War god. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). Considered to be a form of Siva, and occasionally of Vishnu, Virabhadra acts as a martial aspect of Siva against the god Daksa, who according to some accounts abused Siva's wife Sati and drove here to angry suicide by self-immolation to avenge the slight. He is depicted bearing four arms. Attributes: arrow, bow, shield and sword. He sometimes wears a necklance of skulls. Three-eyed and three-headed.

Viraj

Primordial goddess. Hindu (Vedic).

Identified as the active female creative principle in the *Rg Veda.*

Viraratri (*night of courage*)

Hindu. See Chinnamastaka.

Virudhaka (*sprouted*)

God. Buddhist. A dikpala or guardian of the southerly direction. Colour: blue or green, Attributes: skin from the head of an elephant and sword. Also identified as the head of a group of demons, the *kumbhandas.*

Virupaksa (*misinformed eyes*)

1. God Hindu. Epithet of Siva and one of the *ekadasarudras* or eleven Rudra deities. Attributes: axe, bell, club, cup, drum, hook, and sword. Three-headed. 2. God. Buddhist. A *dikpala* or guardian of the western direction. God of snakes, Colour: red. Attributes: jewel, snake and stupa or domed shrine.

Vishwakarma

According to Rig Reda, Vishwakarma is the divine architect of the whole universe. He is the personification of the creative power that welds heaven and earth together. He is the son of Brahma and is

the official architect of all the gods palaces. He is painted white, has a club in his right hand, wears a crown, a necklace of gold, rings on his wrists and holds tools in his left hand.

All the flying chariots of the gods, all their weapons are his creation. It was Vishwakarma who built the golden city of Lanka, over which King Ravan ruled. He built the city of Dwarka, the capital of Lord Krishna after the later had left Mathura, it was again Vishwakarma who made the Agneyastra (the weapons throwing fairy flames) and it was he who revealed the Sthapatya Veda, or the science of mechanics and architecture. Mahabharat describes him as "The Lord of the arts, executor of a thousand handicrafts, the carpenter of the gods, the most eminent of artisans, the fashioner of all ornaments, on whose craft all menu subsist, and whom, a great and immortal god, they continuously worship"

According to legends his daughter Sanjana was married to Surya, the sun. As she was not able to endure the heat and light of the sun, Vishwakarma placed Surya upon his lathe and cut away an eighth part of his brightness. The fragments that fell on the earth due to this operation were used by Vishwakarma to form "the discuss of Vishnu, the trident of Shiv, the weapon of Kuvera, the god of wealth, the lance of Kartekeya, the god of war and the weapons of all other gods".

Vishwakarma is also reputed to have made the image of Jagannath and left it icomplete due to an interruption. He is the god whose blessings enabled Nal, the monkey, to build the bridge over sea for Lord Ram right from the coast in the south of India to Lanka of Ravan.

According to Satpath Brahman, Vishwakarma per-formed a Sarvmedha Yagya (a universal sacrifice) in which he offered up all creatures and ultimately himself too. This process of ending the universe also became the process of creating another new universe. In this way every sacrifice is also a repetition of that first creative act. This is a representation of the drama of the cyclic process of destruction and renewal of all cosmic life and matter.

He is the presiding deity of all craftsmen. The architects and also

the factory owners perform the worship of Vishwakarma when the sun enters the Bhadrapada constellation; this ceremony is performed in front of the implements of trade or a manufacturing machine. The carpenter worships the chisel, the saw, etc., the weaver prays before the shuttle while the potter worships the wheel and so on. On this day an atmosphere of festivity is blended with the rituals of prayers. As an independent god, Vishwakarma is still worshipped in some parts of Bengal.

Vishnu

Origin Hindu (Vedic, Epic and Puranic) (India]. One of a triad of creator gods.

Known period of worship possibly from circa 1700 BC until the present day.

Synonyms appearing as ten major incarnations or avataras: Matsya, Kurma, Varcha, Narashima, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krsna or Balarama, Buddha, and Kalki (n). Other epithets include Abjaja, Agjayoni, Adhoksaja, Anantasayana, Aniruddha.

Centre (s) of cult many sanctuaries throughout the sub-continent.

Art references sculptures generally in bronze, but also in stone. Reliefs.

Literary sources Rg Veda; *Mahabharata and Ramayana* epics: Puranic literature.

Vishnu began, according to the Vedas, as a minor cosmic deity imagined striding the sky in three geant steps-rising, zenith and setting. He was never a solar god, but became briefly associated with the movements of the sun in the sky.

Vishnu's prestige developed with the Epics and of the three deities making up the apex of the modern Hindu pantheon, he is the most widely worshipped and pre-eminent (see also Brahma and Siva). The keeper of civilized morality and order. In the *Mahabharata*, he is partly identified with Krisna. According to one Puranic legendary source. Vishnu was created from the left side of the primordial creator force. The Puranas also provide complex classifications for various aspects of Visnu: His most frequent

consort is the goddess of fortune, Laksmi, with whom he is often depicted standing or resting on a lotus. His sacred animal is Garuda.

Vishnu is the preserver of the world. He rules real time, or history, and through the concept of *karma* he maintains a moral balance which he corrects occasionally in the guise of one of his incarnations. He is a chief adversary of Yama, the god of the dead, and has the power to repel death. He is also closely identified with sacred water or *nara*, his presence pervading the Ganges. He is believed to sleep for four months each year, resting on the serpent Sesa with a lotus sprouting from his navel, after which he is roused by a special rite.

The followers of Vishnu are the Vaisnavas and are mainly in the north of India, though there exists a strong following amongst the Tamils in the south. The Vaisnava caste mark is a V-shaped sign identified with water which has a property of descending.

Vishnu is depicted with many heads or with four heads, generally with four arms, typically holding a wide assortment of attributes including conch and prayer wheel. He may also carry a discus, which relects a destructive aspect, a mace of authority and a lotus. Around his neck may be the sacred stone, the *kausrabha*, and typically he has an obvious shock of chest hair.

Hindu gods and goddesses are phenomenal, but in due course of time Vishnu, as God of all gods, acquired supremacy, which continues till date. He is the central and the major diety of the trinity, viz., Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv. Though technically amongst these three chiefs gods known as creator, preserver, and destroyer, Vishnu is the Preserver, for all practical purpose he is demmed to be all-powerful, allknowing and all-present.

The name Vishnu comes from the root vish, which means "to spread in all directions, to pervade". Hence Vishnu is Pervader. He is the inner centre, the core, the nucleus, the cohesive point through which everything exists. He swells in everything, owns everything and overcomes anything.

According to scriptures, old and not so old, Vishnu is known under

innumerable names. Shankarachrya's commentary on the *Vishnu-Sahastra-nama* explains the meaning of a thousand names of Vishnu.

At the dawn of Aryan religion's formative stage, Vishnu is found to be a god amongst so many other gods. But his rise on the scale of worship and prayer is very rapid and already before the end of the Vedic times, he rises to the highest pedestal. The form and image of Vishnu as well as its significance is explained in detail in Purans and several other minor Upanishads.

The two most common representations of Vishnu show him either sleeping over the waves of the ocean on the coils of the serpent-deity, named Shesh Nag, or standing on waves with for hands—each hand holding one of his four chief attributes.

About the four arms of Vishnu, Gopal-uttartapani Upanishad says:

"In my lower right hand, which represents the revolving or creative tendency, I hold the conch, symbol of the five elements.

"In the upper right hand, which represents the cohesive tendency I hold the discus, shining like an infant sun, symbol of the mind.

"In the upper left hand which represents the tendency towards dispersion and liberation, I hold the lotus, symbol of the causal power of illusion from which the universe rises.

"In my lower left hand, which represents the notion of individual existence, is the mace, symbol of primeval knowledge."

The Conch (Shankh) named *Panchjanya* is the fountain that evolves the five elements, i.e., water, fire, air, earth and sky or space. When blown it produces a sound that is associated with primeval sound from which creation developed.

The Discus or wheel (Chakra) of Vishnu named Sudershan. It has six spokes and symbolises six-petaled lotus. It represents the limitless controlling all the six seasons and is the fearful weapon that cuts off the heads of all demons.

The Lotus of Vishnu is named Padma. It is the symbol of purity and represents the unfolding of creation. It is the truth (Sathva).

The element from which emerge the rules of conduct (Dharma) and knowledge (Jnana).

The Mace (Gada) of Vishnu is named Kaumodaki. It represents the elemental force, from which all physical and mental powers are derived.

In some images where in place of Mace, the Bow, Arrows and Quiver are shown, the symbols represent as follows. The bow called Sarnga represents the ego, origin of sensorial perception which means that it is the symbol of the divine power of illusion (Maya), while the numerous Arrows of Vishnu are the senses, the fields of activity of the intellect and the Quiver is the store- house of actions.

The worshippers of Vishnu, known as Vaishnavs, recognise in him the Supreme Being, out of whom emerge Brahma, the active creator, Vishnu himself the preserver, and Shiv or Rudra, the destructor.

Vishnu's preserving, restoring and protecting powers have been manifested to the world in a variety of forms, called 'Avatara's, in which one or more portions of his divine attributes were embodied in the shape of a human being or an animal or a human- animal combined form, possessing great and sometimes supernatural powers. All these Avtars of Vishnu appeared in the world either to correct some great evil or to effect some great good on the earth. These incarnations are ten in number, though Bhagvata Purana increases them to twenty two and adds further that they are innumerable.

However out of the ten universally recognised incarnations, nine are said to have appeared in the world while the tenth is yet to descend here.

The first of these is *Matsya* (fish) incarnation. According to Hindu mythology the universe is subject to a cycle of periodical destruction and thereafter new creation. Before the latest creation of the present universe, the four Vedas (the holy books from the mouth of the Supreme-Deity) remained drowned in the waters. It was necessary to get hold of them to instruct Brahma about the

work of creation. Vishnu was therefore appointed to bring up the Vedas from the deep. He took the form of a fish (Matsya), descended into the waters and brought-up these sacred books.

The second is *Kachyup* or *Kurma* (tortoise) incarnation. In this Vishnu assumed the form of a tortoises and took the newly created earth upon his back in order to render this trembling globe a stability. The belief is held that to this hour the earth is supported on the back of this tortoise.

The third incarnation is that of *Varah* (boar). In periodical destructions of the world, once the earth sunk into the deep waters, Vishnu, the great preserver, taking the form of a boar descended into the waters and drew up the earth with the help of his tusks.

The fourth incarnation is that of *Narsingh* (half-loin half-man combine). This special form was adopted by Vishnu to kill a demoniac ruler, named Hiranyakashyapu, who had pleased the god Brahma by his religious sacrifices. Lord Brahma had given him the blessing that no known man or animal born in the natural process could kill him, that he could not die either in the day or in the night, on the earth or in eavens, either by fire, by water or by any weapon. It was to kill such a tyrant and to remove him from the earth that Vishnu assumed the form of Narsingh, which was neither man nor animal; came out of a broken pillar, laid hold of the demon-king by its teeth, put him up on his thighs and tore him up in the middle by his claws. It was evening time—neither day nor night. This incarnation demands separate treatment in some detail because Narsingh is stil worshipped as a full fledged deity in many parts of India.

The fifth incarnation is that of *Vaman* (the dwarf). The fouth lineal descendant of Hiranyakashyapu, named Bali, through his devotion and penances defeated Indra, the god of the firmament, humbled other gods and extended his authority over the three worlds. All the gods appealed to Vishnu for protection and he became manifest in his Dwarf Avtar of Vaman for the purpose of restraining Bali. Once when this King was making a great religious sacrifice, Vishnu in the form of Vaman appeared before him for gifts in the company of other Brahmans. Bali was extremely pleased to see a

holy man with so diminutive form and promised to give him whatever he should ask. Vishnu asked only for as much land as he could measure by three steps. Bali laughingly agreed to grant the boon of three steps. Vishnu as dwarf stepped over heaven in first stride and then on earth in second stride. Then out of respect to Bali's kindness and his grandfather Prahlad's great virtues, Vishnu stopped short and left to him Patal, the subterranian region. Bali's capital was Mahapablipuram.

The sixth incarnation is that of *Parsuram*. Parsu is the name of an axe-like weapon adopted by this incarnation. This incarnation was as a Brahman, who manifested himself at the close of the satyayug (the first great millenium of Hindu mythological time calculus). This appearance was for the purpose of representing the tyranny of the power-drunk Kshatriya-caste. This sixth Avatar of Vishnu appeared in the world before Ram, the seventh Avatar, but they are both represented to be living at the same time.

When the Kshatriya Kings of the earth and their ministers became very corrupt and committed all sorts of sings, the goddess Prithvi (Mother-Earth) went to Vishnu and prayed for relief. Her petition was accepted and Vishnu appeared on the earth as a descendant of great sage Bhrigoo. To avenge the gruesome murder of his father by a Kshatriya King and the great oppression perpetrated by rulers he is said to have cleared the earth of the Kshatriyas twenty-one times and filled with their blood five large lakes. He is said to be instrumental in colonising much of Southern India, where so many shrines are dedicated to him.

The seventh and eighth Avatars of Vishnu are those of most famous heroes of mythology, *Ram* and *Krishna*. Ram was the son of Dashrath, king of Ayodhya, who appeared to destroy the arch-demon Ravana, while Krishna, deemed to be the most perfect Avatar of Vishnu, came to the world to kill evil doers and to establish the rule of righteousness. These two incarnations are the best known and most popular gods amongst the Hindus every where and have been dealt with elsewhere independently.

The ninth Avatar is that of *Balram*, also known as Bala-bhadra or Bala-deva, the elder brother of Krishna The story in Mahabharat

narrates that Vishnu took two hairs, a white and a black one, and that these became Balram and Krishan, the two children of Devaki. He was so powerful that he, single-handedly, at a very tender age killed the great demon, Asur Dhenuka, who had the form of an ass. Another demon tried to carry off Balram on his shoulders but the young boy beat out the demon's brain with his fists. When Krishna went to Mathura, Balram accompanied him and manfully supported him till Kans was killed by his younger brother. He also taught both Duryodhan and Bhim the use of the mace. His chief weapon is ploughshare (hal) and he is therefore named Haldhar too.

Those who hold the view that Balram is not the incarnation of Vishnu but of the great serpent Sesha on whom Vishnu reclines, claim that the ninth Avatar of Vishnu is Buddha. In this case the phenomenal success of Buddha as a religious teacher seems to have persuaded the Brahmins to adopt him as one member of their own pantheon of gods.

The tenth and the last incarnation of Vishnu that is yet to appear in the world at the end of the Kalyug or the Machine Age is that of *Kalki.* This Avatar shall appear seated on a white horse with a drawn sword blazing like a comet. He shall come to finally destroy the wicked, to restart the new creation and to restore the purity of conduct in people's lives.

All the above incarnations are only the earthly manifestation of Vishnu, who himself is eternal, unchangeable and immutable. He is blue-skinned and in all pictures, images and reliefs he is seen in rich ornaments and regal garments. His wife is Lakshmi or Sri, the goddess of wealth and fortune. His place of abode is Vaikuntha (heaven) and his vehicle is Garuda, a giant-sized eagle which often is shown as a winged human-shaped figure having a break-like nose. Vishnu is the infinite ocean from which the world emerges. Hence his symbol is water (*Nara*) and he himself is called 'Narayan' —the one who dwells upon the waters. He is pictured with the many-headed snake, as mentioned above, and this denotes Anant Nag (the timeless or ageless snake). From his navel grows the lotus out of which appears Brahman, the god who created the universe.

Such is the Supreme God Vishnu, the all-pervading divinity, who descends as an Avatar (incarnation) to establish the rule of law and order of justice in each important age of the world's history.

Visnu Trivikrama

Form of the god Visnu. Hindú (Epic and Puranic). Trivikrama is the transformation into a giant from Visnu's dwarf avatara Vamana, in order to confirm his dominance over the world by covering it in three huge strides.

Visvakarman (*architect of the universe*)

Poorly defined creator god. Hindu (Vedic). Similar to Dyaus Pitar, he is described as the artist of the gods who may be linked or identified with Tvastar. He evolved, as the son of Prabhasa and Yogasiddha, into an occasional consol of the mother goddess Sarasvati.

Visvamitra

Minor god. Hindu (Purantc). According to legend, the father of the god Narada.

Visvarupa

Lesser known incarnation of the god Visnu. Hindu. In Vedic literature he is identified as the son of Tvastar. Vishnu took the avatara at the request of Arjuna. His animal is Garuda. Attributes: many. Also Viratapurusa.

Visvosnisa

God. Buddhist. An usnisa apparently connected with the guardian deities or *dikpalas* is the southerly direction. Colour: green.

Vitthali

God. Hindu (Epic and Puranic). A lesser known incarnation of the Visnu (or Krsna). The cult of Vitthali is centred mainly on Panharpur, near Bombay, where he is the object of devotion by the Varkari sect. Generally depicted standing on a brick, wearing a fez-like hat and with hands on hips. Also Vithoba; Panduranga.

Vivasvan *(shining)*

Sun god. Hindu (Vedic and Puranic). The original Vedic list of six descendants of the goddess Aditi or *adityas*, all of whom take the role of sun gods was, in later times, enlarged to twelve, including Vivasvan. One of his titles is the 'embodiment of ancestral law'. His consort is Saranyu and he is identified as the father of Yama and Yami, as well as Manu and the Asvins. Colour: golden. Attributes: forest garland, two lotuses and trident. Also Vivasvat.

Vrtra

Demonic god of chaos. Hindu (Vedic). A primordial being who existed before the formation of the cosmos and who was slain by the mother goddess Sarasvati.

Vyasa

Minor incarnation of the god Visnu.

Hindu (Vedic, Epic and Puranic). Vyasa is said to be the author of the Vedas, the *Mahabharata* epic and the Puranas. He ranks with Hyagriva and Sarasvati as a lord of knowledge and wisdom, and is responsible for dividing the Tree of Knowlege into parts. In the texts he is depicted as dark-skinned and accompanied by four students, Summanta, Palia. Vaisampayana and Jaimini. He may be bearded. Also Vedavyasa.

W

Women Status in Hinduism

Actualiy, all Hindus, especially those who belong to the Brahmin caste, are supposed to wear a dot on their foreheads. It is supposed to be at the centre of the meeting point of the two eyes to protect that important point. That important point is known as the "Spiritual eye" or "third eye" or *Ajna Chakra*. There is a lot of discussion about this center in books relating to Kundalini Power (Tantric literature). These dots are made of herbal (turmeric) powder or sandalwood paste.

Only a person who meditates on this point is upposed to see light. Hindus believe that Jesus Christ was referring to this point when he said, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy body is full of light." (Mathew 6-22). In India, Vaishnavites put this dot in an elongated form, starting from the center between the eyes and going to the topmost point on the head, known as Sahasrara, to smoothen and protect the whole path of the flow of Kundalini power, which I have explained before. Anyway, in India as time went on, women kept up the system of wearing dots and a red dot of herbal powders meant that the woman is a respectably married lady. Widows are not supposed to wear to a red dot. No particular attributes can be given to this system today. Some women even go for different colours of paint to match the colour of the sarees they waer!

Women are kept on a pedestal in Hinduism, but at the same time their freedon is curtailed for the sake of protection. In the Code of Manu, it is stated that a woman should be protected by her father during her childhood, by her husband during her youth, and by her son during her old age. Manu also asked society to worship

woman, because she is the "light of the house". Hinduism believes that a woman who devotes her ontire life to the well-being of her husband is a Pativrata and she is endowed with numerous powers, usually attained by Sages.

In Hinduism, Saraswati is the Goddess of Knowledge, Lakshmi is the Goddess of Wealth, and Parvati is the Goddess of Power. At the same time, they are the consorts of Brahma, Vishṇu and Siva respectively. The Mother God comes before the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. So in mythology and in Sruti literature, women are held in very high esteem. In the 'Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, one of the persons asking grilling uqestions to Sage Yajnavalkya is none other than a female saint named Gargi. The Saka Agamas or Tantras glority the supreme as the Mother of the Universe under one of the names and forms of Devi. In Tantras, the female aspirant is looked upon as an embodiment of Shakti and she is worshipped through rituals like Kumari Pooja (virgin worship) and Shakti Upasana (Goddess worship).

Wrong With Hinduism

There is nothing wrong with Hinduism at all. Some people misunderstand the essence of Hinduism and that creates problems and misery among people.

1. For example, some run away from their duties and all call themselves Sannyasins or Sadhus and lead beggar's lives. The Gita specifically states that no one will reach the state of inaction (Nishkarmata) by shunning duties because man by nature does actions all the time. It is also wrong to believe that Hinduism can be understood only if clothed in Kavi robe and never in a three-piece suit.

2. Karma and Fate are the two most misused words among the Hindus. Some refuse to use their free will at all and lead the lives of earth-worms under the guise of total surrender to God. By not using their free will, they become victims of their emotions and the whole country pays for their laziness.

3. Doing wrong actions and then bringing in scriptures to support them is another mistake some do.

4. Some among the younger generation of Hindus look at Hinduism as a taboo only to be touched when they hit 60. They perceive Hinduism as being full of dogmas without even reading one line from the Vedas and the Upanishads.

5. Some mix up mythology, Vedic and Upanishadri teachings. That creates unnecessary arguments about scriptures. Arguing on mythological stories is the most stupid act of all.

Y

Yajna (*sacrifice*)

God. Hindu. A minor *avatara* of Visnu and embodiment of the Brahmanic ritual.

Yajurveda

The Vedas are the oldest known human documents in terms of religion, philosophy and literature. The term 'Veda' signifies the sacred knowledge and wisdom. These so valuable monuments of Indian sacred lore and learning were composed in the dim hoary past and show the path of ultimate release from human bondage through righteousness, self-knowledge and surrender to the Universal Soul. As such their teachings cut across all the imaginable boundaries of cast, creed, country, clime and age. In their appeal and application they are universal and belong to all the ages and to the entire humanity. They are four: Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, but they are spoken as 'Trayi', the tiple vidya or the threefold knowledge because they deal with jnan, bhakti and karma, and are in verse, songs and prose. The rigveda underlines the path of jnan or knowledge, the Yajurveda that of karma or action, and Samaveda the path of bhakti or devotion and total surrender. Atharvaveda represents a synthesis of these three. They are invariably referred to as the "Triple Eternal Vedas", (trayam brahma sanatanam), probably because the Atharvaveda, the last one, is relatively of quite a late origin. These four together form the foundation of Indian religious, philosophical and cultural systems of India-Indian civilization and culture has survived the ravages of time and successive alien invasions all these centuries only because it is based on the firm rock-foundation

of the wisdom of the Vedas. In order to possess a proper understanding and an insight into Indian culture, thought and wisdom it is essential that one has a good grounding in the Vedas, the supreme authority and knowledge of the people now called the Hindus.

Yajurveda is a collection of sacred mantras or texts to be recited at the time of ritual sacrifice. At such a sacrifice Brahman, the main priest, would sit on the northern side of the altar, on the right side would sit the udgatr, on the left would sit hotar, and on the right side the adhvaryu. Brahman would recite the Atharvaveda, hotar the Rigveda, Udgatr the Samveda, and adhvaryu would recite the mantras from Yajurveda while pouring oblations into the sacrificial fire. Thus Yajurveda is a kind of sacrificial prayer-book for the adhvaryu priest, composed in sacred hymns in verse of different metres and also in prose. These hymns are addressed to various gods and goddesses. These hymns are esentially ritualistic but embody the loftiest sentiments that man can ever feel for his god or goddess. The recitation of these mantras is supposed to have a deep spiritual impact on the aspirant. Thus Yajurveda is a book of karamkanda.

The Yajurveda is characterized by its division into two collection of texts. The first is the Taittiriya-samhita, also called 'Krishna' or Black Yajurveda. The second is Vajasaneyi- samhita, also known as 'Shukla' or White Yajurveda. In the former the Samhita and Brahmana portions are confused and so it is called the 'Black'. The latter contains only the mantras and its Brahmana portion is collected separately in the Satpatha Brahmana. As is well-known each of the four Vedas consists of the Samhita and Brahmana. The Samhitas or collections contain original texts of the Vedas, comprising collection of hymns, prayers, incantations, ritualistic formulas and litanies. The Brahmanas form the commentary and interpretation of the Samhitas or the original texts. The Brahmanas are again divided into Brahtexts. The Brahmanas are again divided into Brahmanas proper, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The Aranyakas or foest texts are called so because they were composed and studied in the forests. They contain the meditation and contemplation of the forest hermits and ascetics on God. The

Upanishads or the Vedanta, attached to the Aranyakas, contain the secret doctrine and much of the oldest Indian thought and wisdom. The term 'Upanishad' literally means ''setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit''. They from the fountain-head of Vedanta and Samkhya philosophies.

In the Shukla or White recension of Yajurveda there is a marked orderliness and the confusion between mantras and Brahmana portion has been cleared, however, the order of sacrifice in both the recensions is similar. In size the Yajurveda is about two- thirds of the Rigveda. As has already been mentioned, Yajurveda consists partly of verses, and partly of prose passages. The measured and rhythmic prose portions are called 'Yajus' and the Yajurveda takes its name after it. The verses found in the Rigveda-samhita mostly can also be found here. They have been dissected and rearranged with additional texts for sacrificial purposes, but its prose formulas and prayers are characteristically Yajurvedic. The Yajurveda consists of 40 books, majority of which contain the prayers and rites for the most important sacrifices. Some of these include new and full moon sacrifices, sacrifices of the seasons, the Soma-sacrifice, prayers and formulas concerning the building of sacrificial altar, Purushamedha and the great Horse- sacrifice (Ashvamedha).

Another characteristic feature of Yajurveda is that its last chapter is an Upanishad. It is the only Upanishad which forms a part of Samhita portion of a Veda. Yajurveda is basically a book of prayers and rituals but to conclude this Veda with an Upanishad (Isa) gives it a new dimension. This marks the fusion of karma (action) and jnan (knowledge). This little Upanishad comprising only 17 verses is matchless in its spirit of synthesis with which it is so richly imbued. This short but invaluable Upanishad which forms a part of the Vajasaneyi Samhita or White Yajurveda is a real jewel of religio-philosophic thought and wisdom. The fusion that it signifies between desireless discharge of duty and excessive ritualism and total obstinence from action is marvellous. The study of Yajurveda is significant from many points of view. In the opinion of Winternitz it makes an interesting reading ''for the student of religion, who studies it as a source not only for the

Indian, but also for the general science of religion, whoever wishes to investigate the origin, the development, and significance of prayer in the history of religion—and this is one of the most interesting chapters of the history of religion—should in no case neglect to bcome acquainted with the prayers of Yajurveda.

"For the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philosophical literature of the Indians, too, these Samhitas are indispensable. Without the Yajurveda we cannot understand Brahmanas, and without these we cannot understand the Upanishads."

The Vedas are 'apanrusheya" or impersonal and as such they signify that in a sense anybody who imbibes their spirit, prays with them and contemplates through them can be their author. You are their author if you read and recite them, if you assimilate their essence you can also envision them as did our ancient seers and Rishis. This renders these books of great wisdom ever living, perennial and relevant. Even their mere recitation with proper understanding is of great spiritual merit as they embody the loftiest human sentiments that one can feel for his supreme God.

Yajurveda Samhita

To thee, O lord, we resort for food and vigour. May Savitar, the god of creation, bliss and knowledge inspire us to perform the most noble deeds. May the kine, never to be killed, be heathy and strong, swelling with calves and free from disease. May a thief and an evil-minded man be ever born amidst us rich is preogeny, free from pain and sickness. May the lord of land and cattle by in constant possession of these. May God guard the progeny, kine and wealth of the Yajman (Sacrificer)!

Thou art the purifier of the sacrifices, thou art heavens, thou art earth. Heat art thou of the being. Thou art sustainer of the universe. May thou increase and stand secure and firm by the help of god and never stumble, nor be the lord of thy sacrifice unsteady!

Thou, the thousand-streamed, art the purifier of the Vasus; thou art, indeed the thousand-streamed purifier of the Vasus. May the all-purifying, thousand-streamed god Savitar, cleansing, purify thee

with that with which he purifies the Vasus. Which cow didst thou milk?

Here is a wishfulfilling cow Vishvayushya of the full span of life. Here is another, Vishvakarman and here is still another, Vishvadhaya. Thee, as Indra's portion, I do increase and prosper with Soma. O Vishnu, be thou protector of this oblation!

O Agni, the lord of vows, I will observe the vow. May I have strength for that. May I be successful in this my vow. New I enter into the truth and renounce the untruth!

Who is it that impels thee to perform noble deeds? He inspires thee. Why does he guide thee? For performance of noble deeds he guides thee, he inspires thee two for doing good deeds, ye two for the completion of the home.

Scorched are the devils, scorched are the niggards. Burnt down are the fiends and the evil ones. Now, I roam at will in the vast spaces.

Thou art destroyer, destroy him who injures us. Harm him who harms us. Destroy him whom we wish to destroy. Thou art gods best conveyor, the best purifier, filled fullest, the most desirable, and the best invoker of gods.

By the impulse of Savitar, the creator of all, I hold thee with arms of Ashvins, with the hands of god Pushan. I take thee, dear to Agni, dear to Soma!

I have generated thee for abundance, not for niggardliness. May mine eye look upon the light of self, may the doors remain safe and secure. I travel at will through the vast spaces; upon the lap of the boundless Aditi, on the navel of the earth I place thee. O god Agni, protect this oblation!

Ye two born of Vishnu's powers, are the source of purification. By creator Savitar's impulse, with his flawless strainer, with the rays of the Sun I purify ye completely. O bright waters, ever flowing forth, thou art first purifiers, promote now this sacrifice and lead forward the Yajman the god-devoted Sacrificer, the noble and liberal donor.

Indra elected you in destroying Vritra, and you elected Indra in

fighting with Vritra. You art sanctified. I consecrate thee, dear to Agni; I purify thee, dear to both Agni and Soma. Be thou pure for divine work, pure and holy for sacrificial rites to gods. Because some of you have been defiled by the impure touch, hereby I make you pure from all this pollution.

Thou art a source of bliss. The fiends have been swept away and so have been the niggards. Aditi's skin art thou, may thou be well received by Aditi. A wooded hill art thou. Thou art a firmly founded stone. May the skin of Aditi receive thee!

Thou art the body of Agni, the releaser of speech. I accept thee for the enjoyment of gods. Thou art a great stone formed out of wood. Make thou ready the joy-giving oblation for gods, carefully make it ready. O maker of oblation, come, O Havishkrit come, Havishkrit come!

Thou art a speaker with the tongure sweet as honey, tell us about manly vigour and sap. May we be victorious over our foes with thy help, O thou ever increasing knowledge! May knowledge receive thee. Swept away are fiends, swept away are nighards. Destroyed are devils. May Vayu purify thee. May Savitar, the golden-handed god, receive you with his flawaless arms.

Dauntless art thou. Remove the raw flesh eater away, O Agni, drive off the fire that consumes corpses. Bring here the devotee of gods. Steadfast art thou. Make the earth firm. I bring thee close for the slaying of the foe, thou devoted to the priests, warriors and the kinsmen.

O Agni, accept our oblations, thou art sustainer, keep the heavens firm. I set thee close for the enemy's ruin, thou devoted to the priests, warriors and kinsmen. Thou art sustainer, keep the heavens firm. I set thee close for the sake of all directions. Be thou heated with the tapas of Bhrigus and Angirases.

For progeny I unite with thee. This is Agni's, this is Agni's and Soma's I join thee for food. Thou art heat, thou art full span of life, vast art thou, spread thou art full span of life, vast art thou, spread thou forth widely. May the Sacrificer be far-famed. May Agni harm not thy skin, may the god Savitar perfect thee in the highest

heaven!

I hold thee by the impulse of god Savitar, with the arms of Ashvins, with the hands of Pushan, thee, who performs sacrifice to gods, I hold. Thou art Indra's right arm. Thou art destroyer of thousands of enemies, armed with thousand sharp spikes. Thou art foe-slaying keen-edged wind!

O Earth, whereupon men perform the sacrifice for gods, may I not harm the roots of the plants that grow here. Go thou to the kine-stall. May heaven rain for thee. O Savitar, creator of all, bind him on the earth with hundred fetters, him who hates us and whom we hate. Do thou never release him.

Scorched art the fiends, scorched are the niggards. Burnt down art the devils, burnt down art wicked ones. I travel at will in the vast space. Unsha pened, still thou art slayer of the foemen! Thou art mighty, for might I cleanse thee.

A girdle for Aditi thou art. Thou art an abode for all-pervading Vishnu. I take thee for food and great might. I look upon thee with an unblinking eye. Thou art tongue of Agni. Be thou a good invoker of gods at every sacrifice, in every home!

By Savitar's impulsion, with flawless strainer, with the rays of the sun, I hereby purify thee. Thou art effulgence, thou art manly strenght. Thou art amrit. Thou, verily, are sacrifice and god's abode. Thou art beloved of gods and gods' inviolable sacrifice!

O Yajna, you are being performed in a well prepared place. You attract all. I consecrate you devoted to Agni. You are the yajna and its altar. I cleanse you for sacrifice. I purify you loving the sacrificial ladles!

You give moisture to Aditi; you are a special creation of all-pervading god. I spread you, soft like wool, the best seat for gods to sit on. Praise be to the lord of the earth, to the lord of the world, and to the lord of all beings!

For the weal of the world the Yajna is performed. For the purification of speech Agni is adored. May Vishvavasu Gandharva lay you round as a protection. You are the protector of the

sacrificer. To protect the world Agni is being lauded in the sacrifice. You are sacrificer's protector and Indra's right arm. May Mitra and Varuna preserve you all around by their firm law!

O sage Agni, the giver of bliss and opulence to all, we enkindle you in the sacrifice till you shine brightly.

You are a kindler. May the Sun preserve you from the front from every curse. You are Savitar's arm. I spread you soft as the wool, the best seat for gods to sit on. May Vasu, Rudra and Aditya, the three gods sit on you!

You are giver of ghee. You are called Juhu (ladle) Set you down on this pleasant seat with the dear home. You are giver of ghee. You are called upabhrit. Sit you down on this pleasant seat with the dear home. You are giver of ghee. You are called Dhruva. Sit you down on this pleasant seat with the dear home. They have sat down at the place of sacrifice in safety. Protect these, O Vishnu, protect the yajna, protect the sacrificer, protect me the hotar priest.

O Agni, winner of corn, giver of food, hastening to the corn, I purify you Salutations to the gods, libations to fathers, be both of you an aid to me!

Today have I brought for oblation the unspoilt ghee. Let me not transgress the sanctity of the sacrifice with my foot, O Vishnu, O Agni, may I abide in your shelter abounding in store of riches. You are yajna's home. Indra began his deeds of valour from here and so the sacrifice became highly elevated.

O Agni, be the hotar-priest, be an envoy of gods. May earth and heaven protect you. May you guard the earth and heaven. May Indra be, by this offering, maker of good oblation to gods. Svaha! May light unite with light!

May Indra grant me the Indra-might. May wealth in abundance gather round us all. May all our desires by fulfilled, our blessings come true. Svaha! have worshipped the mother Earth. May the mother Earth make me shine like fire, I being the kindler of fire.

I have rendered homage to the father Heaven. May father Heaven accept my homage. I feed upon the corn with the mouth of Agni. I

feed on you by the impulse of Savitar, with the arms of Ashvins and with both the hands of Pushan I consume you with the mouth of Agni!

O god Savitar, this yajna of yours, they say, is performed for Brihaspati, the Brahman priest. Therefore, protect the sacrifice, guard the sacrificer, therefore protect me.

May your rapid mind enjoy the ghee. May Brihaspati extend this yajna. May he preserve it from harm. Let all the gods enjoy here. Let it be so. Om, fare forward!

O Agni, this fuel is for you. Increase by means of it and grow mighty. May we also increase and grow in might. O Agni, you are winner of corn, you produce corn, I cleanse you!

May I have the victory like the victory of Agni and Soma. May I fare forward by the impulse of sacrificial food. May Agni and Soma drive him away who hates us, drive off the man whom we detest.

We offer you for the Vasus, for the Rudras, for the Adityas. May Heaven and Earth bring you to light. May Mitra and Varuna nourish you with rain. May the birds fly licking what is drenched. Go with the speed of the spotted mares of the Maruts. Go to heaven, having become a spotted cow thyself, and from there bring the rain for us, O Agni, you are the guardian of eye, guard my eye!

Protect the two yoke-fellows, you rich in fatness. You are in grace and conduct me unto grace. Glory to you yajna and increase. Be auspicious to me, steadfast for my weal!

O all-devouring, unfeebled Gani, protect me gainst weapons, protect from the lightning, protect me from snare and ruin, from harmful food, render our food free from poison. Let me abide happily in my house praying to you and performing noble deeds. Svaha! This is our prayer to god of close embracements Agni, and to Sarasvati, the sister of Fame!

O Veda, you are the knower of all. May you become knowledge-giving Veda for me just as you have become for gods their Veda. O path-showing gods, knowing the pathway of truth, walk on it. O

God, lord of mind, this sacrifice is for you, fix it rightfully like a world in the air!

May Indra with the Adityas, the Vasus, the Maruts and the Vishvadevas bless the sacred grass with ghee. Svaha! May all these oblations reach the heaven.

Who liberates you from the bonds? He, the sustainer of subjects, liberates you. Why does he iberate you? He does it for him, for happiness of all. This is the allotted portion of the fiends.

We are united with glory, vigour, bodies, we are united with the best mind. May Tvashtar, the bounteous giver, grant us riches of many kinds. May he purge each and every fault and blemish from our body.

O God, you are self-existent, self-effulgent and most exalted! You are bestower of splendour. Grant me splendour! I follow the path that Surya treads.

O Agni, lord of the home, may I become a good householder through you, living with you, O Agni, master of the home. May you be the excellent householder through my prayers, O Agni. May the household affairs of both of us, the husband and wife be well managed through hundred years. I follow the path that Surya treads.

O Agni, the lord of vows, I have observed the vow. I was successful in the vow I had taken, full power was mine. Still am I he who observed the vow, I am verily he, and no other.

To you Agni, hail! who bears oblations to father. To you Soma hail, accompanied by fathers. The fiends and demons who occupied the sacred altar have now been destroyed.

May Agni drive these demons away who being nourished by the oblations offered to fathers, roam about freely in various guises, whether they be disguised in thin or fat bodies.

O fathers, enjoy yourselves here, be nourished like bulls with each of the allotted portions. The fathers have enjoyed themselves, and here like bulls have grown healthy and strong with their allotted portions.

Salutations to you, O fathers, and to your genial sap. Fathers, obeisance to you for you ardour. Fathers, salutation to you for your longevity. Salutations to you for your life, O fathers, for your righteous passion, obeisance to you, O fathers! O fathers, grant us homes. Fathers, we offer you ever what we possess. O fathers, we offer this raiment, clothe yourselves in it.

O fathers, grant us a baby son, a boy garlanded with a wealth of lotuses, so that there may be a heroic man.

O waters, you are the bearers of ghee, corn, milk and dripping saps. You are the best and immortat drink. You increase the sustaining vigour. Satisfy my fathers.

Serve Agni with the fuel, with oblations of ghee, awake the guest and then pay offerings to the gods.

Offer rich oblations of ghee to Agni, the well kindled Jatavedas.

O Angiras, we increase you with fuel sticks and sacred ghee. O youthful Agni, grow brilliant with great flames!

O Agni, rich oblations, dripping with ghee may go unto you along with fuel. Accept these my oblations with favour!

You are power, knowledge and bliss. I lay upon the back of the Earth, the place of sacrifice to gods, this food-consuming Agni, for obtaining food. May I become like heaven in plenty and like earth in compass.

The Sun, the spotted Bull has come and sat before the mother Dawn and is now advancing to his father Heaven.

His lustre penetrates within the space like inhalation and exhalation. The Sun shines throughout the heavens.

The Sun rules supreme over the thirty worlds, all the days at break of dawn. Hymns are showered on the Bird.

Agni is light and light Agni. Svaha! Surya is light and light Surya. Svaha! Agni is brilliance and brilliance Agni. Svaha! Surya is brilliance and brilliance Surya. Svaha! Light is Surya and Surya light. Svaha!

May this oblation reach unto Agni, who lives with effulgent god Savitar and Night with Indra besides her. May Surya, living with Indra with Dawn beside him, accept this oblation.

Performing yajna, may we pronounce the vedic texts in praise of Agni who hears us even when afar from us.

Agni, the height and head of heaven, the lord of the earth, quickens the vitality of waters.

I invoke you both Indra and Agni and please you both together with oblation of corn. You both are bestowers of corn and riches. You twain I call for obtaining food.

O Agni, this is your ordained place of origin, whence born you shine forth. Knowing this, O Agni, rise up making our riches grow.

The learned priests made Agni the first invoker, the first to be worshipped in sacrifice, and praised in rites. The seers Bhrigu and Apanavana kindled the all-pervading Agni first in the forests for the weal of mankind.

They, the learned priests, knowing his ancient splendour, have drawn this milk from this cow-like Sage.

O Agni, you are our protector, protect my body. You are giver of life, give me full span of life, O Agni! you are giver of splendour, give me splendour, O Agni! you are giver of splendour, give me splendour, O Agni! All that is lacking in my body, Agni, grant me that!

O uninjured, effulgent, mighty, foe-slaying Agni, we, well nourished with food and strong, shall enkindle you through hundred years. O goddess Night, rich in shining lights, may I attain you and end in safety.

O Agni, you have attained the glory of Surya, the praise of Seers, and the abode dear to you. May I attain likewise to long life, to glory, to offspring and to abundant wealth!

O kine, you are food, may I enjoy your nourishing food. You are strength, may I have your strength. You are energy, may I have your energy. You are abundant wealth, may I have your abundant

wealth!

O wealthy kine, sport hero in these, places in this stall, in this region, in this house. Remain here and go not away.

O cow, you are made of many forms and colours. May I attain the ownership of such power-giving kine. To you, remover of the gloom, O Agni, we approach with prayers, day by day, with reverence do we come.

We do come to Agni, who is splendid, protector of holy rites, illuminator of truth, effulgent One, increassing in his own abode.

Just as a sire is to his son, so be you to us easy of access, O Agni, be ever with us for our weal.

O Agni, be our close friend, our protector and our well-wisher, dwelling with us. O effulgent one, come, dwell with us and grant us glorious wealth.

O most radiant Agni, we approach you with prayers for happiness and weal for our friends. So listen our prayers, befriend and guard us against all wicked men.

O cow Ida, come, O cow Aditi, come here, O cows so much desired by all, come here. May I obtain all my heart's desire through you.

O Brahmanaspate, the lord of knowledge, make him glorious who presses out Soma juice, even as you made Kakshivan, the son of the seer Ushik.

Let him dewell ever with us who is rich, removes disease, increases wealth, and is prompt in actions.

O Brahmanaspate, protect us, let not the foeman's curse, let not his treachery approach us.

May we attain the divine, unassailable and great protection of the three gods—Mitra, Aryaman and Varuna.

Neither in home nor on pathways nor in places perilous, has the wicked foe power over these gods.

They the sons of Aditi, grant light for ever to a mortal man so that

he may live long.

O Indra, you are never fruitless, you are ever gracious to your devotee. O Maghavan, your bounty as a biberal god is boundless.

We meditate on the excellent radiance of god Savitar, the generator of all. May he inspire our minds!

May your unassailable chariot wherewith you protect your devotees, be ever near us on every side!

O God may I be rich in subjects, well-manned with excellent heroes and well-nourished with best food. O friend of man, protect my subjects. O adorable, guard my cattle. O God, increasing all, protect my food!

O effulgent Lord, giver of excellent wealth, all-knowing, we approach you alone. O Agni grant us splendour with strength, O imperial God!

This Agni, the Grihapatya, is the lord of the home, is the giver of wealth to the subjects. O Lord of the home, O Agni, grant us splendour with wealth. This Agni dwells on the earth, increases riches and strength. O earth-dwelling Agni, grant us splendour with wealth.

O house-dwelling man, fear not, nor tremble. I bearer of strength come to you. I bearing strength, excellent wisdom and happy mind, come to you, rejoicing in spirit.

The home on which the traveller ponders, staying far from it, there dwell happiness and joy. We call that home to welcome us. May it know us well who know it well.

Here in this our house may we have cows, goats, sheep and rich food in abundance. I come to you for safety, and quietude. May we possess mundane and divine joys and felicity!

We invocate the foe-slaying, the voracious, the loving Maruts who take delight in their mess of meal.

We do expiate each sinful act that we have committed either in village or the wild, in company or corporeal sense. Svaha!

O ever-moving, purifying Bath, you move slowly on your path. I wash out the sins that I have committed with my sense-organs, and the sins done with men against mankind. O god, preserve me from the foe who inflicts much injury.

Well have they feasted and rejoiced, the friends have risen and gone away. The sages, effulgent in themselves have lauded thee with their latest hymn. Now, Indra, yoke your two bay steeds!

O Maghavan, so fair to look upon, we reverence you. This lauded, come to us as desired with richly laden car. Now, Indra, yoke you two bay steeds!

O Rudra, this is your allotted share. Please take it with your sister Ambika. Svaha! This is your allotted position, Rudra, the rat is thy victim.

We have contented Rudra, who makes the foemen weep, the three-eyed god, so that we may grow wealthier, be more prosperous, our dwellings better and may achieve greater success in our jobs.

We worship the three-eyed god Tryambaka who augments our prosperity. As a ripe cucumber is released from its stem, so may I be released from bonds of death by his grace and not be bereft of immortality. We worship him, Tryambaka, the bestower of hushand, full of sweet fragrance. Like a ripe cucumber from its stem, may we be released from the bonds of death, and not be bereft of immortality.

This, Rudra, is thy allotted oblation, with it depart beyond the Mujavans with your bow unstrung and muffled in a clothe. Deepart, O god, wearing skin garments, with auspicious mind and without harming us.

May we attain the triple life, the triple life of Jamdagni, the triple life of the sage Kashyapa and triple life of the gods. May the same three-flod life be ours!

Shiva, the gracious, is your name, the thunder is your sire, salutations be to you, harm me not. I approach you for longevity, for good food, for progeny, for wealth in abundance, for noble children and for heroic strength.

We have reached the earth's sacrificing spot wherein all gods take delight. May we crossing by Rik, by Saman, and by Yajus the miseries, rejoice in food and the growth of the wealth. May these divine Waters be gracious to me. May these herbs protect me. O weapon, forbear to harm the worshipper!

May these water purify us like mothers. May the purifiers of ghee cleanse us with ghee. The divine waters remove all our physical defilements. I emerge from them cleansed and purified. You are embodiment of tapas and diksha. I bear you, gracious and blissful ones, maintaining shining and happy appearance.

You are splendour-giving milk of kine. Grant me splendour. You are pupil or Vritra's eye. You are giver of eyes. Give me the sense of sight.

Purify me the lord of knowledge. Purify me the lord of speech. Purify me, O lord Savitar, with flawless strainer and with the rays of Surya! O lord God of the purified souls, may I with your grace accomplish my lofty desire to purify myself.

O gods, we approach you for happy wealth, as the yajna proceeds. O gods, we invoke you for blessings during this sacrifice.

We perform the sacrifice with steadfast mind. Savaha! We perform the yajna with the aid of heavens. Svaha! We perform the sacrifice for the good of Heaven and Earth. Svaha! We perform it with the grace of wind. Svaha! We perform it with full dedication.

For resolute and inspiring Agni is this offering, it is for that Agni who develops intellect, the consecration bestowing Agni. This is for Purban, Sarasvati and Agni. O divine, shining, great and all-beneficial Waters, O Heaven and Earth, O vast mid-region between them, we perform this sacrifice with oblations for Brihaspati. Svaha! May all mortal men seek the friendship of the all-guiding god Savitar. All pray to him for happy wealth. May all acquire wealth and prosper thereby!

You are the art of Rik and Saman. I commence the yajna with this art. May Rik and Saman protect me during the sacrifice. You are refuge of all, grant me refuge. Salutations to you, forbear to harm

me you Angirases vigour. You, soft like wool, grant me vigour. You are the garment-knot of Soma. You are the all- pervading bliss obtained from God. Give sacrificer this bliss. You are the source of Indra's might. Make the crops abundant. O Tree, stand erect, and guard me against sins till the sacrifice is over!

Observe the vow. Agni is Brahman, Agni is sacrifice, the fuel is pure and fit for yajna. We meditate on divine intelligence for aid. May that intelligence be within my control. May that intelligence be within my control. May the gods, mind-born, endowed with intellect and wisdom, prompt in action, protect us. Svaha! This oblation is for them.

May the waters that we have frunk become strength-giving, become auspicious drink within our stomach. May they be pleasant to our taste, free from disease, sin, sickness, remover of the fear of death, full of divine qualities and strengtheners of enternal laws.

This earth is your sachrificial hody. Waters I forsake but not the off-spring. Freed from sin and sanctified by Svaha, may the waters enter the earth. May they unite with the earth.

O Agni keep the vigil, we shall enjoy the most refreshing sleeep. Guard us with watchful care. Awaken us again from sleep!

After rebirth I have regained my mind, I have regained my life, breath and soul, eyes and ears. May Vaishvanara, the guardian of your body, the unassailed Agni, protect us from sin and distress!

O radiant Agni, you are the guardian of sacred vows among men, you are adorable in holy rites. O Soma, give us this much wealth now and yet more later. Savitar, the god of creation, who gives wealth has given us riches.

O Shukra, this is your body, this is your radiance. Unite with this your form and gain splendour. You are active and impetuous, sustained by mind and loved by Vishnu.

For you truth-oriented progress use this form as an instrument. Svaha! You are pure and blissful, you are immortal and united with the powers of gods!

You are knowledge, mind you are, intelligence, skill, imperial

power, adorable and double headed Aditi. Be our aid in going forth or in retreating back. May Mitra fasten you by the foot, may Pushan guard your pathways for Indra, whose eye is over all!

May your mother permit you to go, your father and brother, and your friend living in the same herd allow you to depart. O goddess, go you to the god, to Soma, go for Indra's sake. May Rudra send you back. Return in safety with Soma as your friend.

You are Vasu's might, you are boundless Aditi, you are Aditya, you are Rudra, Chandra you are, May Brihaspati grant you bliss and rest. May Rudra with the Vasus look upon you auspiciously!

On boundless Aditi's head, on the sacrificial sacred place I sprinkle you. Rich in ghee you are Indra's footstep. Svaha! Rejoice in us, we are your kinsmen. There are riches in you. May I possess riches. May I Never by bereft of riches and nourishment. Yours are the riches.

I adore him, the god Savitar, shining brightly between heaven and earth, embodiment of truth, wealth-giving, beloved of all, thoughtful, poet, and sage, to him whose effulgent self shines high in the sky, the golden-handed, the most wise, creator of heaven. May all living beings enjoy life in you. May you grant breath to all living creatures!

I buy the splendid with splendid, the immortal with immortal and you who are pure with what is pure. Let the cow be with the sacrificer and these gold pieces with us. You are embodiment of fervour and Prajapati's nature. With the best animal you are bought. May I grow rich with thousand fold riches.

O friend, come unto us increasing the number of our friends. Be you seated on the right of Indra desiring your own increase and happiness of others. Eloquence, brilliance, enmity to evil, dynamism dexterity, and friendship with the weak, these seven are your gold pieces for the purchase of Soma Preserve these, let them never fail you.

O Agni, establish me firmly in righteousness keeping me away from sin and unrighteousness. May I attain beatitude and long life

by following a virtuous path of living!

Now we have attained the path which is free from sin and is full of bliss, the path on which a man overcomes his foes and gathers wealth.

O lord of the world, be my gracious aid, move forward on your path to all the places. Let not thieves, let not robbers and malignant wolves waiting your coming not find you. Fly away like a falcon, go to the houses of sacrificer. That is the place specially cleansed and purified.

Homage be unto Varuna and Mitra's eye, the great god, far-sighted, omniscient and the ensign of gods. Sing hymns of praise to Surya, to the son of heavens.

You are both seat and support of Varuna. You are Varuna's sacrificial seat where he sits, Varuna's place of sacrifice. Sit you down on Varuna's seat!

May you, O Soma, come to all those houses where you are honoured with worship and poured oblations. O wealth-giver, advancer of heroes, slayer of the foes, sparing the brave, come to our houses!

O Soma, you are body of Agni. I accept you for the completion of the yajna. You are the body of the Soma-juice, I accept you for Vishnu. Oh Soma, you are the source of reception of the guests, you are for Vishnu, you are fast in speed like falcon, therefore, I accept you for Vishnu. I accept you as bestower of abundant wealth. I take you for Vishnu.

You are the birth place of Agni. You are the cause of manly strength. You are Urvashi, you are Ayu. You are Pururavas. I churn you with the Gayatri metre. I churn you with the Trishtup metre and with Jagati metre.

Be you both of the same one mind for us, of one thought, free from sin and blemish. Harm not the sacrifice, harm not the sacrifice's lord and be kind to us this day!

Protector from the curse, son of the seers this Agni is active having entered the invoked Agni. Here is this sacrifice for us, offer

oblations to the gods without slackness and a happy mind.

O Agni, protector of the vow, may we be able to fulfil our vows under you. May your form be ever with me and my form be with you. O guardian of the vows, let our vows be united and one. May the lord of consecration inspire me for initiation, may the lord of forvour impell me to take a vow of fervour!

O Agni, your form which is present in iron, in the lowest depths, has driven away the awful speech. Svaha! That same form is present in silver in gold and in every object. Svaha!

O Agni for me you are an abode for the afflicted. For me you are a gathering place of wealth. Protect me from the state of destitution. Protect me from fear. I call you Nabhas, the space- born. Approach us, O Agni, with the names of Angira and Ayu. You whom this earth contains, I lay you down with each inviolate holy name which you bear. I lay you down for gods' delight!

You are like foe-subduing lioness, be ready for gods' weal. You are foe-subduing lioness, be sanctified for gods. You are foe- slaying lioness, beautify yourself for gods!

May Indra with the eight Vasus guard you in the east. May Varuna with the eleven Rudras protect you from the rear, and the swift like thought guard you on the right with Fathers. May Vishvakarma protect you on the left with the Adityas! I throw away this heated water from this place of sacrifice.

The sages, skilled well in knowledge concentrate their soul, yea, concentrate their mind and intellect in yoga. He, the only knower of all functions, assigns their priestly tasks. Great is praise of the god Savitar. Svaha!

The all-pervading God sustains this world. He has created the three worlds of earth, heaven and the mid-region. In his feet abides the whole world. We offer this oblation to him.

O earth, you are rich in sweet food, rich in good milch-kine, rich in fertile pastures, and engaged in rendering service to mankind; Vishnu has kept both Heaven and Earth apart and has firmly established the latter with pegs around it.

Now I will describe the mighty deeds of Vishnu who measured out the earthly realms and propped the heavens above, taking three mighty strides during this course.

O Vishnu, fill both of your hands full with riches from heaven, from earth and from the vast wide air's mid-region and grant us these riches from the right and the left hands. We worship you through this sacrifice.

For his mighty deeds is Vishnu acclaimed. He dwells in the mountains like a wild beast, roaming at will. In his three mighty strides are set all the realms.

By impulse of Savitar I take you with arm of Ashvins and hands of Pushan. You are woman to aid us. Hereby I cut the necks of demons asunder. You are mighty and great, and mighty is the sound that you utter. Utter your mighty sounding prayer to Indra.

You are self-effulgent and foe-conquering. You are king and subduer of the enemies. Men's lord are you and the slayer of the fiends. All-ruler are you and the killer of the foe-men!

Prop the heaven, fill the air full, make the earth firm. May the effulgent Maruts establish you and Mitra-Varuna protect you. I guard you with valour, knowledge and wealth. Strengthen the Brahmanhood, increase the nobles, increase the life-span and strengthen the offspring.

O wife of Sacrificer, firm established you are. Firm be your husband the Sacrificer, with off-spring and cattle in this house. O Heaven and Earth, by you rich in fatness. You are like Indra's shadow and the refuge of all people.

O Indra, worthy of adoration with lauds, may these our songs of praise reach unto you. May they, vise like the aged, ever increasing be dear to you.

You are vast like ocean, all-pervading and unborn. The entire universe is within one part of your energy. You are eternal and source of the universe. You are speech and the shed of sacrifice, full of splendour. You two doors of the sacrifice do not distress me. O lord and ruler of the pathways lead me forth. May I be happy on

this God-reaching bath!

Look you upon me with the eye of a friend. O adorable mighty Agnis, receiver of oblations, guard me with your blazing army. Fill me with wealth, Agnis, be my guardians. My salutations to you, harm me not!

Oh Soma, you are a light that wears all forms and figures and serves the gods as illuminator. You withdraw your generous protection from body-wounding enemies and those who practice hatred. May this oblation reach you easily, O mighty one. May god Soma graciously enjoy this my oblation of ghee.

May you, O Agni, grant us ample abode and comfort for our living and go in front of us attacking the enemy. May you win spoil for us. May you subdue our foes on your triumphant march!

O Vishnu, step forth thou widely in order to give us ample place for our dwelling. O increaser with ghee, drink this ghee and grant increase to the sacrificer. This offering is for you.

This Soma is for you, god Savitar, guard him well, let not demons harm you. O Soma, now you have joined gods as a god. I have joined here my fellow-men through abundant wealth. Offer this oblation to Varuna and be free from Varuna's noose.

By impulse of God Savitar I accept you with the arms of Ashvins and with the hands of Pushan. You are woman and I your husband cut the necks of the fiends. You are the remover of our foes, therefore, remove our haters and enemies. May the worlds where dwell our fathers be pure. You are the abode of the fathers.

You are our leader. You establish on the path of rectitude even the leaders of high caliber. Know this well. May god Savitar, who rules over you, anoint you with sweet juices. You have touched the sky with your top, has filled the air with your middle and has strengthened the earth with your base.

Your abodes which we desire to visit are full of bright rays of light. In those very places was imprinted the loftiest step of the wide-striding Vishnu. I know you as the winner of riches, the winner of Brahmans and the warrior class. Strengthen the

Brahmans, strengthen the Nobles, strengthen the life of the subjects, strenghten the subects!

O men, look you upon the mighty deeds of Vishnu whereby he, the friend of Indra, has let his holy ways be known.

The learned evermore behold the lofties seat of Vishnu in the form of heaven's splendour. Behold you ever that!

You are omnipresent. The learned people know you as such. May the Sacrificer obtain riches from all sides. O Sacrificer, you are lustrous son of the heaven. May all these people living on this earth be your friends and all the beasts of the forest be under you control!

You are protector and remover of distress of your subjects. May you possess virtuous subjects and glorious, able and learned men. May you be creative and as such enjoy all the pleasurable riches!

O wealthy subjects, enjoy. May Brihaspati protect our wealth. I release you, O prince, from bondage of ignorance. Be bold and struggle against ignorance to acquire knowledge.

May you both balmed with ghee preserve the cattle. O fortunate woman be one thoughted with the Sacrificer and treat him lovingly. Protect him well as does the vast space the air. Perform yourself the sacrifice with all the materials. Be united with his body to obtain a son. O giver of hapiness, help him in this great and vast sacrifice, and thereby establish him in the sacrifice. Welcome the learned visitors who come first and also those who come next in the yajna.

Be not crooked like a serpent, be not poisonous like a viper or violent like a wild beast. Obeisance be to you, O performer of yajna. Progress you unhindred and accept the stream of water for purification and folow the path of truth and righteousness.

O Waters, convey this offering to gods, you pure, divine and well provided waters. May we providers by well provided.

I cleanse your speech, I cleanse your breath, your eyes, your navel, your sexual organ, your rump and your whole conduct.

May your mind grow full, your breath grow in strength, your eyes become fuller, your ears grow stronger. Whatever in you is short-

tempered may that be removed, your desire be fulfilled and your conduct be purified. Blessed be your days. O herb guard him and do not harm. Weapons, you also protect him.

O evil one, you are the devil's share, be expelled from here. Hereby I sweep away and repel the demons. I send the fiends to the nether most dark region. I invest the heaven and earth with yajna-sanctified sap. Let Agni enjoy the oblation of ghee, let Vayu enjoy the offerings. Svaha! May consecrated Earth and Surya go to Vayu, the offspring of the Maruts.

O Waters, wash away all my malicious deeds, sinful taints and stains, any wrong that I have done to others, the lies I have uttered and the curse of mine. May these Waters and Pavaman free me from that sin!

May your mind be strengthened and you breath united with life-force. You are the slayer of foes. May Agni mature you, waters impel you. May you be possessed of Vayu's speed and Surya's heat so that the enemy reel and stumble under your pressure.

O you enjoyers of ghee, drink it, enjoy the gravy you drinkers of gravy. You are heaven's oblation. We offer oblations to all the directions, to fore-regions, the high-regions, the lower and middle ones, to all the regions.

Sail on the oceans in the best ship, fly in the aeroplanes, go god Savitar. Svaha! Go to Mitra and Varuna, know day and night, know the Vedas, Rig, Yajur, Soma and Atharva with their constituent parts. Possess the knowledge of heaven and earth, know the rites of sacrifice, obtain knowledge of herbs, go to the divine ether. Know Vaishvanara through science, grant me good mind and heart. May the smoke of your sacrifice ascend to the sky, and your radiance to heaven. May you fill the vast earth with the ashes of the yajna.

Harm not the waters, injure not the herbs, guard us at every place. O Varuna, we take the vow not to kill the kine, unworthy to be slain. Let waters be our best friends. Let the herbs be unfriendly like foes to them whom we detest and who hate us.

These waters are full of saps and good food, rich in that food, one

desires to have. May the sacrifice be rich in oblations and rich be Surya in giving Sacrificer the abundant gift.

I set you down in the assembly of wise. You are Indra-Agni's share of all the gods. May the waters collected around the Sun, and those wherewith the Sun has joined come hither to our yajna with speed.

O Soma, approach your people like a father and let people come to you like sons. May Agni with his fuel hear my invocation. May divine waters hear it, and you learned and steadfast people. May god Savitar hear my prayers. Svaha!

O god Agni, whom you protect in the battle or urge to the fight, he is the lord of abundant food.

By impulse of god Savitar, with the arms of Ashvins and with the hands of Pushan I accept you. You are the best giver of gifts. Perform this great yajna for Indra with most excellent sacrificial things.

Satisfy my mind, satisfy my speech, satisfy my breath, my eyes, my ears, my soul, satisfy my progeny, satisfy my kine, elephants, horses and cattle, satisfy my men and followers, let my bands of men never be sad!

We appoint you for Indra accompanied by the Vasus and the Rudras, for Indra with the Adityas. For foe-slaying Indra, for Soma- bringing and falcon-like foe-attacking Indra. You for splendour- giving Agni!

O Soma, your light that extends in heaven, on the earth, that in mid-region's vast space, with that help the Sacrificer in his enrichment, bless you the giver!

O you immortal consorts, possessed of great might, foe-slaying, bestowing wealth, devoted to your divine husband's grant success to this sacrifice and enjoy Soma at our request!

O ladies, be not afraid, tremble not in fear, take courage. You twain being firm, stay resolute taking courage so that your shortcomings are removed and you be happy like the moon.

O Mother, let from the east, west, north, south, from every

direction the regions rush to meet you. O Mother, let noble meet, noble!

O Mightiest, O Maghavan, bless the mortal man. There is none but you to bless with happiness. I repeat your words!

O man purify yourself for the lord of speech. Becoming pure by the hands of the Sun, yourself a divine one, be pure for the gods whose share you are.

O Soma, sweeten our foods and drinks. What ever divine name you have, life-giving, victorious, to that I pour out this libation of Soma. Svaha!

Self-born you are from the powers that are in heaven and on earth, for the good of senses, for the weal of learned and for all the beings. I appoint you for divine beings who guard the light. May you be of pure mind to win the Sun. I laud you for your virtuous conduct. May your enemy who transgresses the law be ruined. I appoint you for exhalation and breath diffused!

You are lord of yamas and niyamas. Therefore, control your vital internal powers, guard your own splendour emanating from within. Destroy all your distress with your yoga so that you may be rich in all sorts of food and wealth.

I place within you the spacious heaven and earth and also the vast mid-region of air. The whole of boundless space is within you. Living and rejoicing in the company of gods, gladden all your subjects.

O Vayu, devourer of the pure, adorn us with thousands of virtues. To you I pour out this rapturous juice, whose first draught, God, you take as your portion.

These presed and poured out pleasant juices long for you both, O Indra and Vayu. This is your home. This is for you both Vayu-Indra.

This Soma has been shed forth for you order-strengthening Varuna and Mitra. Listen you to my invocation, O Soma, I offer you to Mitra and Varuna in this vessel.

May we be delighted in much wealth just as gods are in oblation and kine in pasture. O Indra O Varuna, give us for ever that milch-cow who shrinks not from milking. This is milch-cow who shrinks not from milking. This is your home. welcome you twain, the righteous ones!

O Ashvins, with your honeyed speech and pleasant tongue fulfil this sacrifice. We have accepted you for your yama and niyama. This is your abode. This Soma is for you the sweet ones!

You, well-manned with heroes, beget heroes with abundant wealth surrounding the sacrificer. Be thus adored with glory conjoined with heaven and earth. Let Sanda be expelled. You are are abode of manliness and heroism!

O sparkling Soma, may we be possessed of your chivalrous strenght and never ending wealth. This is the first all bounteous consecration. He the first king, guard, friend and leader.

He is the first sage and lord of speech. Offer you the Soma juice to that effulgent Indra. May the sacrificers satisfy him with sweet oblations those who become pleased having gained their due offerings and are engaged in the sacrifice. May they approach Agni.

May all the eleven majestic gods residing in heaven, the eleven ones who dwell upon the earth, and those eleven dwelling in waters, accept this our sacrifice, and be pleased.

This Soma is pressed out for the priest, for the nobles, this is pressed out for the sacrificer, for increase of food and obtaining of power, for the satisfaction of earth and heaven, for excellent life. I accept Soma for all the gods. This is your home and refuge. You are for all the gods.!

You are bound with righteous laws. I take you for lord Indra of the Brihat, O mighty one, lover of invocation. I take you for Indra, the lord of might and vigour, for Vishnu, your home. I take you for gods' protection and for long life of the sacrifice.

I accept you for Mitra and Varuna, for the protection of gods, for the long life of sacrifice, you for the learned men, for yajna. I take

you as the protector of Indra, Agni and sacrifice you for Indra and Brihaspati, for Indra and Vishnu.

The gods have generated Agni, the envoy of earth, head of the Sun, the guest, the lord of men, a pure receptacle fit for their mouths, the effulgent, born in holy order, the Vaishvanara.

Bound by laws you are firm, firmly established, the firmest of the firm, the most stead fast of those who never have been shaken. This is your home. I with a firm mind, with firm speech take you as the leader of humanity. So now may Indra make our men of one heart, one mind and free from enemies.

Who are you? Who amongst us all are you? Whose son are yo? What is your name? We want to know your name so that to delight you with our Soma juice. May I be possessed of the majesty of the earth, the space and the sun, the lord of my subjects. May I be possessed of heroic men to nourish thecountry to strength with the help of these heroic warriors.

Come, Indra and Agni, unto us being pleased with our lauds, come to the precious Soma-drink, Drink of this draught, impelled by our songs. I take you for Indra, for Agni. This is your home. I place you here for Indra and Agni.

Come here the learned men who kindle the sacred fire and offer oblation with firm mind, whose friend is Indra, the ever youghful. I take you for Indra and Agni. This is your dwelling. Having accepted you we offer oblation to Indra and Agni through you.

O you all the gods, protector, bestower, cherishers of mankind, come here to your devotee's offering. This is your dwelling. I offer you to all the gods.

O Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, come here, guard and drink the Soma as you did the juice in the yajna performed by Saryati. O hero, the learned singers serve you ever under your guidance and keeping in the sacrifice. You are the strengthener of the strengthener of the law. I accept you for the love of Indra, girt by the Maruts. This is your home. I take you for Indra's sake.

The sages call Indra to secure new protection, him who is the lord

of men, the mighty, whom the Maruts accompany, who is the best bestower, remover of sorrows, the divine ruler, the subduer of the foe and the winer of battles. You are the strengthener of the law. This is your dwelling. I accept you for Indra accompanied by the Maruts, for the strength of the Maruts.

Surya's bright beams bear him high, the God who knows all that breathes, so that all may behold him. Svaha!

Surya is the might of gods, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni, the sustainer of heaven, earth and space, the soul of all that moves and moves not. This oblation is for him.

O divine Agni, through righteousness lead us to riches, you the knower of all the pathways. Remove from us the sin causing us go astray and wander from the right path. We offer you rich adoration and this oblation.

May Agni grant us ample room and comfort. May he march forth before us to the battlefield destroying the foes. May he win spoils for us, and subdue the foemen. This is for him.

May I today honour a Brahman sprung from illustrious father and grandfather, bown of Rishis, is himself a Rishi, the fit recipient of priestly guerdon. May this guerdon go the learned priests established by the gods and satisfy them and enter into him who gives.

Who bestows? Upon whom is it bestowed? Desire bestows, for Desire it is bestowed. Desire is the bestower and Desire is the bestowed. O Desire, to you, I give this all!

The sacrifice is for gods' happiness. O Addityas, be gracious to us. Send your favours here and be our kind liberator from distress. I accept you for the love of Adityas.

O Adityas, this is your Soma-draught, enjoy it. O you men, believe my speech, the wife and husband, the householders, achieve their good by following the righteous path of duty and a manly son is born to them who earn riches and leads a happy sinless life.

O Savitar, grant us bliss today, tomorrow, grant us happiness each day of the life. May we, through our excellent wisdom, gain

splendour with happy and spacious dwelling, O god creator!

Bound by laws, you are Savitar's worshipper and giver of happiness and food. Grant me joy and food, promote the sacrifice and bestow riches or the Sacrificer. I take you for Savitar, the lord of all riches.

Bound by law you are. Firmly established abode of bliss you are. Homage be to you, O doer of great deeds. I appoint you for all the gods. This is your home. You are for the universal gods.

Bound by yama and niyama you are. O god Soma, radiant, pleasure- giving full of sustaining power, protector of wise speech, impelled by the sages I strengthen all my body for you. May I ever prosper whether far or near. May the heaven protect me.

May I behold the sun on both sides and also that resides in the inmost heart of the sages, the absolute truth.

O Agni, full of affection for all, bestower of bliss, drink this Soma juice produced by the learned, truthful in speech. You are Prajapati, strong manly impregner. May I obtain a heroic son, in connection with you, the mighty impregnator, the lord of valour and the protector of progeny!

You are atonement of sins committed against the gods. You are atonement to sins done against mankind. You atone the sins done against the fathers, done against oneself. You are atonement of sins of every kind. You are atonement of all the sins, of those I have knowingly committed, and also of those done unawares.

May we all be ever united with radiance, fine body, refreshing sap and cheerful spirit. Let Tvashtar grant us wealth and remove our bodily deficiency.

O Indra. lead us with the nobility of your mind to wealth, kine and the sages, O Maghavan, to princes, lead us to divine deeds inspired by the learned, and to devotion of gods who deserve our adoration.

May this oblation of our please Savitar, the generous Dhatr, Prajapati, Agni, Tvashtar and Vishnu. May these gods grant the Sacrificer the abundant wealth with offspring!

O gods, we have made your seats smooth and comfortable, who pleased with us, have come to this yajna. Enjoying and bearing oblations, O gods, grant us abundant wealth!

O god Agni, the willing gods whom you have brought here in this sacrifice send them to their espective abodes. As you all have enjoyed food-offerings and libations, approach the air, the heat, the light of the Sun. Svaha!

O Agni, at this place, in this sacrifice, we have elected you as our presiding priest. You performed the sacrifice with your special efforts, removing all the obstacles. Now the sacrifice being over you may please go to your place. Svaha!

O gods, knower of the righteous paths, go along the righteous one when you have discovered it. O god, lord of the mind and thought, perform this sacrifice in the right spirit. Svaha!

O sacrifice, approach the sacrifice, seek the Sacrificer, seek your won dwelling. Svaha! O Sacrificer, this your sacrifice has been performed by many sages, uttering aloud the vedic hymns. Accept it with Svaha!

Never be a serpent, never be a viper. God Varuna has made a spacious pathway for Surya to travel. He has made the path smooth and for easy walk where no path was. He has warned away the fiends who distress the spirit. Homage be to such sin-removing for Varuna. His fetters beneat our feet are crushed!

Your hear is in waters, in the oceans. May herbs and waters be co-mingled with you. We worship the lord of Sacrifice with vedic songs of praise and sacrificial offerings.

O divine Waters, this is your offspring. Portect him carefully, dearly loved and so well nurtured O Soma, this is your home, obtain bliss ther an and protect us by warding off all our distress.

Definitely he is possessed of the best protectors in whose place of yajna the Maruts, the resplenden lords of the sky has drunk the Soma juice.

May the vast Heaven and Earth, the mighty couple, shower riches and ample food on this our sacrifice, and protect it from the foes.

Mount your car, O Vritra-slayer Indra, your bay steeds have been harnessed by saying. May you, bound with yama and niyama, be attracted to this sacrifice by the utterance of hymns. This is your house. We establish you in this splace of sixteen aspects and full of splendour.

O Soma-drinker Indra, yoke your pair of bay steeds of long mane, strong in body and fast to conduct you to the desired place, then come to listen to our lauds.

Both Indra and Varuna are chief lord and sovereign. They, the first and foremost have made this draught. I drink after them. May she, the Goddess of Speech, seated with Soma, rejoice herself.

Just as the bright rays of this Sun are beheld by all the human beings, so are you bound by the laws of yama and niyama. I take you for the resplendent Surya. This is your dwelling. I accept you for Surya, the resplendent one. O Surya, you are the brightest of the gods. May I be the brightest among men with your grace!

O mighty cow, smell this jar of Soma. May this Soma juice pass into you. Then return to us with a rich store of milk. Pour forth riches for us thousand fold in floods of your milk. May I grow rich in milck-kine.

Adorable, delightful, loveable, splendid, full of milk and ghee, most glorious, inviolable, the mighty one, these are your names O cow. Teach me the righteous deeds of gods to follow.

O Indra, subdue or foremen, humble them who would challenge us in battle. Cast him down to the gloom of the nether world who seeks to harm us. We accept you for you are bound by the yamas and niyamas, for Indra, the foe-dispeller. This is your dwelling. I take you for Indra who dispels our foes.

Let us invoke today, to help us, the lord of speech, the doer of noble deeds, Vishvakarman, the knower of our thoughts. May he kindly hear deeds are righteous.

O Vishvakarman, the doer of noble deeds, you have made Indra unassailable with your strength-giving oblations. The people make obeisance to him because the Mighty one is specially adorable.

I stir you for the shower from rain-bearing clouds. I stir you for the shower from rain-bearing thunder-clouds. I stir you for the shower from rain-bearing clouds that are pleasing to behold. I stir you for rain from from the happy clouds. I stir you pure. In the form of pur water. I stir you in the form of day, in the form of the rays of Surya.

O virtuous and radiant Soma, eagerly go to Agni's cherished food, go willingly to Indra's well-loved food. Go as our friend to all the gods, O virtuous and radiant Soma.

Dwell here in all delight, here is surety, live here with performance of your virtuous acts. Produce a child suckling his mother. May he maintain the increase of abundant wealth living among us.

You are the growth and promotion of the sacrifice. May we obtain, with your aid, the light of wisdom and immortality. May we ascend the heaven from earth. May we attain bliss, enlightenment and heaven.

O Indra, O Parvata, slay with your fatal weapons the man, who fain would war with us, O champions who march forward in the battle. of the foemen approach us, drive them away without fail, slay them with the bolt. O you Render, render our foes on all sides, tear them to pieces, O hero, in all the ways, so that we may grow rich in heroic sons, rich in food to feed with everywhere, on the earth, in ether and in the sky!

Here is Soma, brought with reverence on the hoicest chariot. Varuna is seated on his seat, Agni is seated on the sacrificial platform and Indra on the sacrificial barrow, and there is nigh Atharvan over ready to guard.

The sacrifice has gone to heaven, to gods, may riches thence come to me. The sacrifice hsa gone to men, to clouds, may riches thence come to me. To fathers, to earth, the sacrifice has gone, may riches thence come to me! Whatever sphere the sacrifice reaches, may bliss come thence to me.

May the four and thirty threads of the sacrifice made up of the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, welve Adityas, Indra, Prajapati and Nature, estabish this our yajna with Svadha. I unify together of these that is

broken. Svaha! May this sacrifice each all the gods!

The fruit of sacrifice has spread for and wide. It has extended in eight directions in the sky. O sacrifice, pour down on my offspring abundant wealth and prosperity. May I attain the full span of life through righteous conduct.

O Soma, grant us gold, steeds and heroes. Svaha! Make us rich in kine, corn and knowledge.

O God savitar, promote well our sacrifice, increase the yajman's portion of wealth. May the divine Gandharva, purifier of our wisdom and will cleanse our mind and purpose. May Vachaspati, the lord of speech sweeten our speech.

I take the life-infusing essence of waters, that are gathered in the Sun and spread in all directions. The essence of waters, the essence so excellent for us, I accept for you.

You are foe-slayer like Indra's thunder bolt, May this man win the war with your aid, you so experienced in war. In gaining wealth we laud the boundless mother Aditi on whom this whole world of life has settled. May Savitar, sustain and establish it.

Immortality lies in waters, in them the healing medicine. O steeds, grow you strong and fleet, having realized the qualities of waters. O celestial waters, food-giving, whatever high and swift moving waves are yours, therewith may this man attaing wayes are yours, therewith may this man attaing the desired riches.

It were the wind, mind and twenty-seven Gandharvas who at first harnessed the swift steeds. May they grant this man that speed.

O steed, you grow swift like wind and add to Indra' splendour when harnessed at right in the chariot. May the enlightened Maruts harness your may Tvastar render your feet swift.

O steed, what swiftness was laid in you in secret that resembles the swiftness granted to the falcon, and the speed found in the air. With that same swiftness be strong for us, O horse, wealth- winning and victorious in war. Become you our winner of riches and saviour in the war. O steeds, winner of foods, going for food, smell you Brihaspati's portion of food-offerings!

May I rise to Brihaspati's loftiest heaven by got Savitar's inspiration, the true impeller. May I attain Indra's highest heaven by Savitar's inspiration, the true impeller. I have attained the loftiest heaven of Brihaspati by Savitar's inviolable inspiration. I have reached Indra's loftiest heaven by god Savitar's inviolable inspiration.

O Brihaspati, win the battle. O men, lift up your songs of praise to Brihaspati, make him win the prize. O Indra, win you the battle. O learned men raise your lauds to Indra to make him win the prize.

May I win the battle under the control and inspiration of Savitar, the giver of true knoledge O war-winning swift steeds, reach you all that goal byond, blocking the enemy's path and winning the quarters with your speed.

This vigourous courser bound in the mouth, bound, by the neck and bound at the flanks, gathers new speed, passes by the milestones along the winding paths and its rider hero hurls with speed his weapons on the enemy.

He alone can conqure the foes who like a fleeting horse or a falcon flying fast onward to its aim, marches forth speedily with firm determination and valour fully equipped to the battle.

O fleet courser be auspicious unto us, while they steadily go to the gods' assembly. May they crush the serpent, the wolf and the wicked and quickly remove all distress!

May the heroes, riding the coursers, known for performing sacrifices, the mighty ones, unassailable warrious, listen to my call. They content thousands of people, perform yajna, and obtain food in abundance. Such heroes win great spoil and splendour in the battle.

O courser, intelligent, immortal, truth-knowing, make us ruch in wealth and food. Drink this sweet juice and be satisfied and then follow the path walked by the gods.

May food in abundance come to me. May both Heaven and Earth approach me, the form of the universe. Let father and mother come to me, may Soma with immortality approach me. You, heroes,

winners of the battle, purified in heart, obey the behest of your commander.

May our life increase through sacrifice, may our life-breath thrive through sacrifice, may our eyes be strengthened through sacrifice, may our eyes be strengthened through sacrifice, may our ears grow strong through sacrifice. May our back be strengthened through yajna. May sacrifice increases through sacrifice. May we ever live as subjects of the Prajapati. May we be victorious, divine, virtuous and lead a happy and long life.

O mother Earth, may we possess your might and manly strength, may we have all your splendour and working strength. Salutations to the mother Earth, homage be to her. This is your sovereignty. You are controller, you are firm and unshaken. I accept you for agriculture, for our welfare, for the good of the world, for increase of wealth in the nation, for peace and calm, and for nourishment of the subjects.

Let us worship Soma, the king, Agni, the twelve Adityas, Vishnu, Surya the creator of all, Brahma, Brinaspati and above all the Prajapati, who has generated all these gods for our protection. Svaha!

Urge the mighty gods Aryaman, Brihaspati, Indra, Sarasvati, the goddess of speech, Vishnu and Vak to grant us riches. Svaha!

O Agni, be auspicious to us and teach us good things in this sacrifice! O winner of thousands, you being the giver of wealth, give us wealth. Here is our oblation.

May Aryaman grant us wealth, god Pushan and Brihaspati. Let goddess of speech Sarasvati grant us our desires. Here is the oblation.

With penta-syllabic metre Pushan won the five directions, may I also win them. God Savitar won the six seasons with six-syllabic metre, may I also win them. With hepta-syllabic metre the Maruts won the seven domestic animals, may I also win them. With octo-syllabic metre Brihaspati won the Gayatri, may I also win that!

With nine-syllabic metre Mitra won Trivrit Stoma, may I also win

that. With deca-syllabic metre Varuna won proud go Viraj, may I also win him. Indra won Trishtup with hendeca-syllabic metre, may I also win that. And all the gods won Jagati with dodeca-syllabic metre, my I also win that.

O Agni, overthrow the opposing forces and cleave into pices the enemy. O invincible god, driving away the foemen, grant riches to this sacrificer.

By Savitar's impulsion, with Ashvins arms and hands of Pushan, with the strength of the neares, I offer you this best oblation for the destruction of the demons. As you have slain the demons so may we also slaughter them. Just as we have slain them so may we slaughter others!

May Savitar impel you for sacrifice. Let Agni of the householders, Soma of the herbs, Brihaspati the lord of speech, Indra for lordship, Rudra for cattle, Mitra for uttering truth, Varuna for the obeying of the Law, urge you to sacrifice.

May gods anoint this mighty man to be without a rival, for mighty rule, for mighty dominion and for great splendour. This man, son of such a person, such a woman, of such a clan, is anointed king, O you subjects. O you so and so kings, he is your lord, he is joy-giving like Soma. He is also sovereign of our learned Brahmans!

The gods drew water full of sweetness, refreshing sap, strength-giving and sovereignty bestowing. Therewith they anointed Varuna and Mitra, therewith they sprinkled Indra who drives away foemen.

These waters are majestic and joy-giving, inviolate, industrious and investing. In these waters dwells Varuna making his home, he, the son of waters, the best of mothers.

O king, you are the main stay of regal power, you are the strength of princely power. Your are the womb and navel of princely power. You are the foe-slaying arm of Indra, you are Mitra's mighty weapon. You are Varuna's possession. With your help may this man subdue his foes. You are the render of forts, you are afflictor of the foe like an arrow. You are the protector of the Law. O brave

warrious, brotect this king from front, protect him from the rear, protect him in the flanks, guard him from all sides.

Let all men protect him. Let Agni, the master of home, know him. Let famed Indra know him, let Mitra and Varuna, the all-knowing god Pushan know aim. May Earth and Heaven know him and also the boundless Aditi, the giver of vast shelter.

The biting creatures who torment others are destroyed. You ascend the east. May the Gayatri metre guard you. May the psalm Rathantra, the triple song of praise, the spring season and riches of knowledge protect you.

O king, march towards the south. May the tishtup verse, the Brithat Sam, the fifteenfold praise, song, the summer season, riches and power of the princes guard you.

Advance towards the west. May Jagti verse guard you, the psalm Vairupa, the seventeenfold praise-song, the rainy season, the store of riches and the people.

Advance towards the north. May Anushtup your guard and so be the Viraja psalm, the twenty-one fold praise-song, the autumn season and riches, the fruitage of sacrifice.

O king, ascend the zenith. May Pankti verse be your guard, the twain psalms of Shahavari and Revati, the thirtythreefold praise-song, the season autumn, three divisions of time, both Winter and Dew seasons and splendour. Cast away the head of the wicked.

You are Soma's brilliance, may my brillianc also shine like yours. Preserve me from death. You are vigour, victory and life.

O Varuna, O Mitra, you rise on high with you golden bodies at the flush of dawn and then mount your car to view the infinity and limitation. Mitra you are friend to all, and you Varuna, the mighty enough to ward off the enemy.

O king, I anoint you with the brilliance the moon, lustre of the fire, splendour of the sun and power of Indra. Be the lord of princes and guard your subjects.

O Prajapati, you only comprehended all these created forms and none besides. Give us our heart' desire when we invoke you. He is father of so and so, he is son to so and so. Likewise we accept you as our father. May we become lord of splendour through righteous ways. O Rudra, your excellent name and form relieve us from miseries, we worship you at home with oblation. All hail!

You are Indra's thunderbolt. I yoke you at the direction of Varuna and Mitra, the great directors and appoint you for alleviating the sufferings of the people and for providing food. May you be unassailable and victorious over the enemy with great might. May we be united with you with mind and might.

O Indra, conqueror of the mighty foes, may we never fail to obtain you through lack of devotion, may we never be without enlightenment. O hero, mount your car. You control the reins and the noble steeds with hands that bear thunder.

All hail to Agni, the lord of household! All hail to Soma, the lord of herbs! All hail to the valiant Maruts! All hail the might of Indra! O mother Earth, never harm me, and may I never harm you.

O Surya, throned in space, the Vasu in mid-region, the priest at the sacrifice, the guest of the householder, you are adorable at all the places. You are ubiquitous, present in space, in truth, creator of waters and earth, mountains, trees and kine. You are mighty law in yourself.

You are so great, you are life, give me life, you yoke all with righteous deeds, you are splendours, give me splendour. You are strength, give me strength. O Mitra and Varuna, you both are two arms of mighty Indra, I draw you near him.

You are handsome, good to sit on, the source of regal power. Sit you down on this pleasant seat, be seated on that which offers comfort, sit you on this seat, the womb of royal power.

Varuna has sat down among his subjects, to administer law and justice, the most wise for universal sway.

You are the subduer of the foes. May these five regions be prosperous for you. You are greatly mighty, master of spiritual

wisdom, and the example of righteous conduct. You are Varuna whose might is real. You are Indra whose might is of the people. You are auspicious and kind Rudra, doer of much, giver of wealth and comforts. You, the source of abundant ruch, are bolt of Indra. Therewith grant me success.

As the spacious Agni, servicable and devoted to duty, reverently receives the oblation of ghee and diffuses them through the rays of the sun, so should a king maintain sovereignty over his subjects.

I go forward urged onward by Savitar the giver of all spendour, by Sarasvati's speech, by Tvashtar's created forms, by Pushan's cattle, by Indra, by Brihaspati, by Vishnu the tenth.

Be you good preachers and teacher like the sun and moon, be mature for Sarasvati, exert your best for protection through your sovereign. Be pure like air, full of virtues to lead a righteous life. Be friend unto him by practising yoga.

Like a farmer whose fields are full of barley, reap the ripe corn, removing the chaff in order to offer food to the aged who deserve respect. O wise king, full of splendour, we accept you for the Ashvins, you for Sarasvati and for Indra, the excellent protector.

You Ashvins, lords of riches, drank full draughts of Soma-juice and helped Indra in his mighty deeds and killed Namuchi of demon birth.

As the parents help a son, so helped the twain Ashvins, Indra in distress, with their wonderful might and wisdom. O Maghavan, you drank the draught that pleases Sarasvati and refreshed yourself having lain the demon Namuchi.

God Savitar first of all having harnessed mind and thought, spread the light from Agni on the earth and in the heaven.

Under the inspiration of god Savitar, having harnessed our mind, we strive to acquire heavenly light for our bliss.

The all-creating and bliss-bestowing god Savitar, harnessed the gods, possessed of celestial light and thought, and impelled them on their way.

The learned priests, well-versed in vedic knowledge harness their mind, harness their holy thoughts. He alone, the all-knowing lord of the law, assigns them their sacred tasks. Lofty is the praise of God, the creator of all.

I yoke your mind to God with prayer and meditation. May the hymns of both of you rise high and pervade the heaven. May all the gods, sons of eternal Prajapati hear it, who dwell in heavenly abodes.

He, the creator of all, the generator of all the worlds, is followed by all the gods according to their might. He who pervades all and has measured out the entire universe, is Savitar.

O all-creating Savitar, promote and advance our sacrifice, increase the sacrificer's portion of splendour. O guardian of divine knowledge, lord of speech, creator of all, cleanser of thoughts and will sweeten our speech.

You are the excellent woman. May we possess the power by your grace to increase Agni in his dwelling, as did Angiras with Jagti verse.

Let Savitar, with a gold implement in his hand, raise Agni high from the earth with Anustup verse is did Angiras.

O steed, the heaven is your loftiest place of birth, your navel is in the mid-region of the space, your shelter is on the earth. Come you running here, impelled to speed, O steed, along the vast space.

O horse, come running and trampling upon the wicked ones, come, spreading gladness all around, come to Rudra. Speed along the vast air with Pushan as your guardian.

The first and foremost Jatavedas illuminates the days before dawn and also illuminates the rays of the sun. He alone illuminates both earth and heaven.

Just as a fleet horse having started on his course, causes fear in the enemy, and just as a householder longs to see with reverent eye Agni kindled in a fine place, so should you.

O steed, having approached the earth, seek Agni with a deep desire

and trample on the ground and then instruct us where can we search that learned and effulgent one.

Sky is your back, the earth your seat, the air your spirity the ocean your place of birth. Assail and trample down the enemy looking around you.

O wealth-giving Courser, rise high from this place for increase of splendour. May we be established in excellent thought while kindling Agni on the earth.

The wealth-giving and fleet Courser has come down on the earth. He has rendered the world beautiful and sacred. May we kindle Agni here on the earth, beautiful to look at, in order to ascend the lofty heaven, the place of happiness.

O Agni, I kindle you reverently with ghee, you dwelling in all the worlds, vast in splendour of great age, the most wide-spread, mighty with food, conspicous and moving transversely.

O Agni, spread you fully in all directions, enkindle you with ghee Accept this my ghee-oblation with grace. Agni, the adorable, effulgent, moving in all directions, is not to be disrespected!

The lord of food, the wise, farsighted has walked round the oblation, granting the sacrificer the splendid boons.

O mighty Agni, of varous forms, learned, victorious, heroic and ever foe-slaying, we adore you from all sides.

O Agni, sovereign lord of men, being pure, you are generated from waters, from stones, from forests, from medicinal nerbs and in the house of the sacrificer.

By impulation of Savitar, the all-creating goh, I kindle the all-pervading Agni on the earth as did Angiras in ancient days, with the arms of Ashvins and the hands of Pushan. O Agni luminous, be autiful to look on, every radiant, engaged in the weal of the subjects, peaceful, never injuring, splenderous. I produce you from the womb of the earth as Angiras was to do.

O Agni, you are nourisher and support of the whole world. Atharvan was the first to kindle you by rubbing the sticks well and

then he brought you of the world rubbed you to life reverently.

Dadhyach, the son of Atharvan, kindled you, O Agni, the slayer of foes, the breaker of their forts.

Agni, the promoter of law, has seated himsen well in the seat of Hotar-priest. He is invoker of the gods, splendid, dynamic, resplendent, passing mighty, pure-tongued, and nourisher of thousands.

O mighty Agni, beloved of the gods, adored by all, sit you down here, be kindled with sacred oblations and then emit the smoke, bright and beautiful to took on.

O pure, heavenly and sweet Waters, pour you down here so that medicinal herbs with their goodly berries spring forth for the cure of diseases like consumption.

O Agni, nobly born with splendour, reside in comfortable nice abode, and robe yourself in many-hued attire!

Arise erect like the lustrous Sun for our protection. You are lofty and bestower of food. We invoke you with oblation-bearing bright rays.

O Agni, you are are a fair child of Earth and heaven and dwell among the herbs to nourish them. O brilliant child, you remove the gloom of night and come forth roaring aloud from your mothers.

O courser, be steady and firm of limbs. Be strong and fleet of foot and broad to bear all that which Agni needs to please himself.

O Agni, be you gracious to creatures of human rach. Scorch not heaven and earth, nor air's mid-realm nor the plants and herbs.

We kindle and feed Agni, in himself the law and truth, as Angiras was wont to do. O herbs all, accord a warm welcome to Agni, the gracious one who comes to see you here and be happy. O Agni, you remove all our distress, diseases and evil tendencies by dwelling here near us.

O herbs, laden with beautiful flowers and goodly fruit, welcome you well this Agni. This seasonable child Agni has been here since ancient times.

O mighty and resplendent Agni, remove all the sorrows, sufferings and the demons who detests us with your vast lustre. May I be happy to engage myself in pleasing Agni, him who is invocable in all holy rites.

May the Vasus form and kindle you with Gayatri verse like Angiras. You are firm and steadfast, you are earth. Grant me, the sacrificer, progeny, ownership of kine, riches, happy heroism and kinsmen. May the Rudras like Angiras form and kindle you with Trishtup. You are firm and steadfast, you are earth. Grant me, the sacrificer, progeny, ownership of kine, riches, happy heroism and kinsmen. May the twelve Adityas form and kindly you like Angiras with Jagati verse. You are ateadfast and firm, you are the Heaven. May all the gods form and kindle you like Angiras with Anushtup verse. You are stead fast and firm, you are Quarters. Grant me, the sacrificer, progeny, ownership of kine, riches, happy heroism and kinsmen.

Let the Vasusnarrate you like Angiras with Gayatri metre. Let the Rudras narrate you like Angiras with Trishtup metre. Let the Adityas narrate beloved of all men, narrate you like Angiras with Anushtup verse. May Indra describe you, may Varuna describe you, May Vishnu narrate you.

May all mortals seek your friendship, the guide of all. May all solicit him for glory, riches and fame. May all of us prosper just as you do.

O mother, wean us not from learning, injure us not. Accomplish with firm mind the task undertaken. May you and your son Agni finish this work with determination.

O goddess Earth, be steadfast for weal. May your sustaining power and the power of life increase. May this oblation be acceptable to gods. Emerge from this sacrifice unharmed!

Fed with wood and ghee, the ancient, the invoker of gods of strength, wonderful in virtues, is Agni.

O Agni, in the fight with the foe-men, help is close to you, guard the men with whom I stand.

O Agni, come here from the farthest place, O lord of the red coursers. Come hither and subdue our enemies, O beloved of many, renowned and ustrous!

O mighty Agni, whatever fuel we offer you, may that be like ghee to you. Accept that most graciously, O youthful one.

The wood that termites have eaten away, from which emmet comes out, may that all be like ghee to you. O youthful god, accept that lovingly.

Just as we feed carefully day after day a stable steed with fodder, so may we enjoy food and our wealth ever increasing, unharmed, your neighbours, offer you every fuel, O Agni.

Having enkindled Agni on earth's navel, we invoke Agni, ever victor, conquering the battle, pleased with oblation, adorable and much lauded, for increase in wealth.

Whatever, enemy hosts there are, attacking fiercely, charging all around with weapons, drawn up in order with arms, whatever, thieves and robbers there are, all these I consign to your mouth, O Agni!

Devour the burgalars with both of your tusks, consume the robbers with your teeth, with both your jaws, eat up the thieves and cheats. Turn him to ashes who would seek to harm us, the man who detests us, and the man who slanders and cheats us.

O lord of food, grant us a share of dood, that would invigorate us and cause no sickness. Onward still onward lead the giver. Grant us maintenance both for our quadrupeds and bipeds.

We ever adore Agni who has shone far effulgent, beaming, immortal, of great manly might, remover of distress, bestower of longevity and fame to the sages, him who exhibits diverse things on this earth.

Night and Dawn, different in visage, accordant, meeting together, suckle the same babe, the sun, which beaming shines between the heaven and earth. The mighty and divine forces support the sun.

Savitar, worshipworthy, at dawn shapes and exhibits all objects

with his radiance. He is the bringer of weal both for bipeds and quadrupeds and removes their distress.

O Agni, you are goodly-pinioned eagle. Trivit stoma is your head and Gayatri your eye, Brihat and Rathantar your two wings. The yajna is your soul, all the verses your limbs and formulas your names. Vamdevya Soma is your body, yajna yajniya Sama your tail and the sacrificial altars your claws. Thus, O Agni, you are like a goodly-pinioned eagle, soar into the sky, reach the heaven!

O Agni, come back again with power, return again with food and life and protect us from sins.

Return Agni, with abundant wealth and drench us with your flowing stream that nourishes all.

O Varuna, free us from the upmost bond, let down the lowest, remove the midmost, so that we may be without sin in your holy law and belong to boundless mother Aditi, O Surya!

The mighty Sun has risen high in the sky before the dawns, removing away darkness with his radiance and light. The fair-formed Agni with lustre has filled at birth with splendour all the world.

He, the embodiment of purity, all pervading, dwelling in mid-air, the hotar-priest, the guest and lord of home, imbiber of truth, omnipresent, invoker of gods, present in the minds of the people, creator of prana, kine, the holy law, floods, earth and mountains, to the great Agni, we offer our prayers.

O Agni, knower of all the deeds, be seated in the lap of this your mother. Do not scorch her with your heat nor burn her with your flame. Shine with your pure lustre in her lap!

First Agni was born from out of heaven, then secondly from us was born Jatavedas. Thirdly he, the most manly-souled appeared in the waters whom the pious and learned sacrificers ever laud and kindle.

O Agni, we know your three powers in three stages and also your diverse forms in many places. We know your most secret and supreme name, we know the source from which you have emerged.

Varuna kindled you in the waters, Prajapati lit you amidst the heavens. There as you stood in the third high region, the mighty Maruts increased you amidst the floods.

The giver of splendour, source of glories, given of wisdom, guardian of Soma, refuge of all, the son of strength, a king in the floods, he shines enkindled in forefront of the dawns.

Germ of creation, ensign of the world sprang to life and pervaded the heaven and earth with radiance. Even the dense clouds he cut as under when passing over, as such he is offered sacrifice by the five clans in unity.

Thus among mortal men immortal Agni was established, the effulgent, purifier, wise, remover of the evil ones and envoy to the gods. He emits the ruddy smoke above him and reaches the heaven with his brislliance, the sustainer of the world.

The most adorable, man's best friend, the Soma's guard Agni, is praised by the sages. We call gracious Heaven and benign Earth to grant us hero-sons and abundant wealth.

Nurse Agni, your guest with fuel, enkindle him with oblations of ghee and pour into it your sacred offerings.

O divine Water, accept the ashes and lay them safe in a freagrant place. Just as th wedded ladies of noble minds bow down to their husbands so do you before this Agni. Bear the ashes on waters as does a mother her son.

O Agni, your home is in floods, into the herbs you force your way and are born anew through the rubbing of fuel-sticks.

Agni, you are the womb of herbs, you are the womb of the trees, you are the womb of all created beings and of all the waters.

O Agni, mark you well my speech, O divine and most youthful god, one detests you and the other sings your laud. I, your devotee, make my obeisance unto your form.

O lord of wealth, O Agni, you are the generous giver. Drive you away our foemen. May you accept this our oblation graciously, O best performer. Savaha!

Agni, let the Rudras, Adityas and the Vasus again kindle you, may the priests rekindle you with their oblations, O bestower of riches. Increase your form with the offered ghee and with it may the sacrificer's wishes be fulfilled.

May all the ancient guards and new protector depart and go away. Yama has ordained this place of earth for the sacrificer. This place for him the Fathers have given.

Agni, you are giver of the best knowledge, may your desires by mine. In me be the fulfilment of your desires. You are the form of Agni, you are the ashes.

Agni, your splendour which is in heaven, in earth, over all the mid-air's vast space in the form of lightning, that is dynamic, the seer of all the good and evil acts of mankind and is your own radiance.

Agni, you reach the floods of heaven, you invoke the gods who inspire thoughts. You are in the waters which are beyond the resplendent sun, and those which are beneath the earth here.

This is your ordained source of being, O Agni, whence born you shone forth. Knowing this, Agni, ascend high and make our riches grow more.

Be you steady and firm, fill up the room, fill up the hole, Indra, Agni, and Brihaspati have established you here in this place.

All the vedic hymns, the Rik, Yajus and Saman have magnified Indra, vast as the ocean, the car-borne, best of the heroes, the lord of corn, the lord of might.

Be you both Jatavedas-Agni one-minded, one thoughted for us, free from guile. Destroy not our yajna, injure not the sacrificer, be auspicious to us today, you all-knowing ones.

Just as the mother bears her son in the womb so has Earth-Ukha has borne in her womb Agni. May Prajapati, the creator of all, accordant with all the gods and seasons release her from the bonds.

Nirriti, follow him who performs not the sacrifice, offers no oblation, follow the thief, the robber. Seek the irreligious, to you be

our obeisance!

I unfasten the binding noose which Niriti, the goddess of destruction has fastened on your neck that none may loose. The same I loose for you. Now eat this food which I offer you. Obeisance be to that goddess by whose grace this has been possible.

Establisher of the sacrificer, protector of truth, gatherer of wealth, Agni, reveals every form and sure with his might, and like Savitar the god of violate laws, like Indra faces the enemy warriors the battlefield.

Happily may the plough-shares turn up the and, happily follow the farmers their oxen! May Vayu and Aditya, being pleased with our oblation use our herbs and plants bear abundant fruit.

Let our furrows be moistened with sweet sap, opproved by the Visvadevas and the Maruts. Be you furrows, succulent, full of corn, milk, ghee, etc. us.

The keen-shared plough, the bringer of bliss, producer of the Soma-drink, shear out for me a fine cow, a sheep, a speedy drawer of the car, and a blooming woman stout and plump.

The year together with its fortnights and other the dawn with its ruddy kine, the Ashvins the their wonderous attainments, Surya with his coppled courser, the Vaishvanara with corn and ghee Svaha!

Herbs that sprang up in the beginning at the time of creation, earlier than the gods, of these, which are brown and capable of nourishing the world, will I proclaim the hundred and seven.

O Hervs, nourishing like mother, you are thous and-named, thousand are your growths. You are possessed of thousand powers, release this yajman of mine from disease.

Herbs that sprang up in the beginning, at the time of creation, earlier than the gods, of these, which are brown and capable of nourishing the world will I proclaim the hundred and seven.

O Herbs, be gracious to us, both bearing blossom and fruit and also

those which would lead us to success with speed like fleet- footed mares.

O Herbs, comforting like mothers, by this name I speak to you. O God, may I gain a horse, a cow clothes and a body free from disease with you favour!

This holy fig tree is your abode, you have made Prana tree your home. Winners of cattle shall you be if you regain this sacrificer for me.

He who goes to places where there are herbs as the kings go to the battlefield, Physician is his name, the slayer of fiendish diseases and chase of ailments.

Herbs rich in Soma-juice, rich in steeds, rich in nourishment, rich in bestowing strength, all these I know that this may be freed from the disease.

Let fruitful herbs and those fruitless, though that blossom and the blossom-less, created by Brihaspati, relieve us from disease and distress.

Relieve me from curse's evil, and the vow arising from Varuna, release me from Yama's noose, from sin and violation done against the sages.

The herbs descending from the heaven said: no disease shall assail the man, whom, while he lives, we pervade.

May unharmed be he who digs you up, unharmed the man for whom I didg. May our bipeds and quadrupeds be free from disease by its use and application.

The Gandharvas dug you out from the earth, Indra and Brihaspati did. King Soma knowing you, made himself free from consumption by your use.

Long-lived be he who digs you out, and he for whom I dig you out. May you also live long for hundred years and grow up with hundred shoots.

O immortal Agni, bestow on us abundant wealth being enkindled by us. Your brilliant form is beautiful to look on, you promote our

sacrifice.

First of all they established you, O Agni, for sacrifice, truthful, mighty, visible to all, so radiant friend of the gods, with ear to hear prayers, most known and magnified by songs of praise.

O Soma, may many nourishing juices be with you, may you wax mighty from every side to subdue the foe-men. May you, thus progressing, win immortality and highest fame in heaven.

Increase you most pleasing Soma, grow, strong through various means like the sun with its rays. Be you our friend for giving us prosperity and vast happiness.

O Agni, your devotee, the sacrificer draws your mind away, even from the highest abode of yours, with reverent speech and songs of praise.

O Agni, all turn to you with prayers of diverse kinds for the fulfilment of their wishes, as did Angiras.

You alone shine forth with brilliance, you royal lord Agni, in your dear dwellings to fulfil the wishes of all that are and are to be in future.

I, the sacrificer, first of all establish Agni within my home for increase of wealth, good progeny an manly strength. May gods aid me in this!

You are support of waters, the source of fire, and enveloper of ocean as it swells and suges, the loftiest, resting on the lotus, spreading out in amplitude in space and its own measure.

The famed Aditya at first appeared in the East and then filled the worlds with his radiance, the womb of both creation and non-creation.

Hiranyagarbha, the golden germ, spran up first of all, the only lord of all created beings. He was also there before the creation of things. He sustains this earth and heaven. Let us worship him, the Prajapati with our oblation.

Surya sprang forth through this earth and heaven along this space and that which existed before. I offer my seven oblations to Aditya

who travels to his own dwelling.

Homage bo to all enemies, like serpent in nature, who dwell on earth, those dwelling in the air, and also to those dwelling in the sky.

Homage be to those that are demons' darts, to those who dwell in the trees like serpents, and to all of them who lie low in holes be homage paid.

Homage be to all the serpents, to them that are in heaven's bright realm, to them that abide in the sun's rays. Adoration be to them that have their home in waters!

Increase and put on your vigour like a wide-spread net, attack the foemen like a mighty king with your aids. Strengthening yourself, shoot deadly arrows to transfix the demons and subdue them all.

O Agni, let your rapid flames riding the wind follow the fiends with all their blazing fury and flaming weapons. Let the demons be scorched with your tongues of flying flames, Agni, let your firebrands rain all over the foe.

O unassailable Agni, send forth the army to destroy our enemy, be he far or near. Be yourself the guardian of our people. May you be ever unharmed and safe from the trouble sent by the foemen.

Rise and sweep away those who take up arms against us, O Agni, burn down the enemy, you possessed of sharpened darts. Humiliate and consume completely like dried-up stubble, him who creates mischief by encouraging our foe!

Rise up, punish them all who fight against us, manifest your own divine strength. Blunt the weapons of the fiends, slay the enemy whether related to us or be he a stranger. I settle you with fire's ardour!

Agni is lofty like the head of heaven, he, the sustainer of earth, quickness the waters' seed. I settle you with mighty Indra' strength.

You are the lord of the sacrifice and the heaven. With your oblation bearing flaming tongue, you sustain the Adityas in the sky and attend the auspicious rites with your benign teams.

Firm you are, sustainer, established in your place by Vishvakarman, O Earth. Let not ocean harm you, let not air injure you, O you steadfast, unshakable earth!

May Prajapati settle you on the waters, on the ocean's surface, you so spacious and vast. O vast one spread yourself wide.

You are bliss-giving Earth, god-mother Aditi, sustainer and nourisher of all the beings of the world. Steady her, do you no harm to her and look on her with an affectionate eye.

O Agni, your light which spreads out the sky in the form of the beams of the sun, therewith help us and our children today to gain splendour.

O Indra, Agni, Brihaspati, O gods, whatever your light is there in the sun, or that in the kine and horses, with all that glorify us!

May honeyed Madhu (Chaitra) and Madhava (Baisakh), the two spring months, sprung of heat, increase my prosperity. May heaven and earth, the waters and the herbs, may Agnis help me, the sacrificer in my progress. May all the Agnis between heaven and earth one-minded, in accord, attend these two spring months as the gods attend Indra. Be seated with this god firm in your seat like Angiras.

You are invincible by the foes, O conqueror, conquer our foemen, subdue them who fain would oppose us, you are possessed of a thousand manly powers, so do you help and be gracious to me.

In spring the winds blow sweetly, the streams flow sweetly for him who performs sacrifice. So may the herbs be sweet for us!

The nights are sweet, sweet are the days, sweet is the terrestrial atmosphere. May sweet be the Heaven to us like our Fathers.

May trees be full of sweet fruits for us, and full sweet the Sun. So may our milch-kine be sweet for us.

Seat yourself firm in the deepness of waters, lest sun, lest heat burning within, scorch you. Let the well-formed subjects be surveyed. May the goodly rain that pours, aid you.

Steadfast you are, and sustainer of the world. So sprang forth he,

Jatavedas from these wombs, the all-knowing one. May this Agni, who knows his rights, convey to the gods these our oblations offered with Gayatri, with Trishtup and with Anushtup verses!

O Agni, abide here in pleasure for long for granting us food, wealth, power, fame, milk, ghee, saps and offspring. You are the lord of earth and self-effulgent. May both the mind and speech of Sarasvati protect you!

O radiant Agni, yoke your most excellent steeds, that bear you with speed to the sacrifice.

Anoint Agni with milk, of diverse forms, the womb of gods, the sustainer of animals, the creator of thousands, the lighter of the world. Remove all the diseases with kindled Agni, obtain the boon of living for hundred years and always avoid the pride!

O Agni, harm not the wind's impetuous rush, Varuna's navel, the cloud, the stream's tawny child and, the steed sprung out from waters, dwelling in the highest heaven, that can crush even stones to powder by trampling.

The ruddly, unwasting, eager, pressing forward sustainer of all, adorable by the sages, Agni, I worship with lauds. Harm you not the cow, so ruch in milk.

O Agni, you dwell in the loftiest realms, you are of diverse forms, Varuna's navel and Tvashtar's guardian. Harm her not, the great, protector of the beings and the source of weal for thousands.

O Agni, may your fierce displeasure spare the sacrificer. You have your being from Agni or heat of the earth, or from the heat of the sun, whereby the omnific lord has engendere creatures.

The Sun, the wonderous strength of the gods, has risen, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni. The spirit of all, the moving and unmoving things. He has filled the heaven, earth and the air with his splendour.

O Agni, injure not these biped and quadruped brought for the sake of sacrifice. Be gracious to these corn-producing beasts, and guard them. Therewith build your form and be well nourished. Let your wrath be upon violent wild beast. Let the foe, whom we hate, be

put to grief.

Injure not this one-hoofed animal, the beautiful horse, neighing in the midst of horses. I offer to you the harmful forest deer, fair in colour. Building your flames up with him be steadfast. May that deer be your victim. Let your flame reach him. May he be injured whom we hate.

Drive, O Agni, our known foemen, drive away from us the unborn ones, O Jatavedas, graciously-minded, without anger bless us so that we may live happily in the thrice-guarded home.

Drive away our enemies, O Agni, with your might, our known foes, ward off those who would attack us secretly. O benebolent in thought and spirit, bless us. May we live long, drive away our foes!

Stoma, the lady of sixteen arts, grants strength and wealth. The Stoma of forty-four skills also grants splendour and riches. You are complement of Agni. As such may all the gods greet you with lauds. Enriched with songs of praise and butter, stay here and grant us wealth and store of children.

This Agni is the head and height of heaven, he is the lord of the earth. This same Agni quickens the waters' seed.

This Agni is the lord of thousand-fold pleasures, the master of hundred-fold food and wealth, the sapient one.

Atharavan, the best of priests, brought you forth from the lotus by rubbing, the head of the priest.

Leader of the sacrifice, you are end of the region to which with your auspicious company you attend. You bear the light-giving Aditya in the sky, making your tongue the conveyor of oblations to gods.

People kindle Agni with their fuel. As a calf is delighted to meet its mother-cow so are people gladdened by seeing the Dawn appear. just as the Branches of the young trees shoot up high so do Agni's flames rising high in the sky.

We offer our songs of praise to Agni, the adorable sage, pure, virtuous and strong. The sage has raised his hymn of praise to Agni

far-reaching as the Sun in the sky.

Agni was ordained to be the first invoker, the best in sacrifice, to be lauded at rites. Him the Bhrigus with their offspring made to kindle in splendour in the forest, spreading to every home.

Agni, the watchful guardian of the created beings has been born, ever active, strong for fresh prosperity. Increasing with ghee, his flames reaching high in the heaven, he shines radiantly enkindled by the briests of sacrifice.

O Agni, dear to Angiras, they caused you to appear when you remained hidden, fleeing back from wood to wood and plant to plant. You are generated by attrition as conquering strength. People call you the son of highly powerful strength.

O men, offer to Agni seemly oblations and your songs of praise to him who is supreme, highly mighty, the son of strength.

O mighty Agni, the lord of all, you bestow all the fruits of the sacrifice on the sacrificer, your friend. Bring us riches as you are kindled at the place of yajna.

O Agni, beloved of many, people invoke you in their homes as most famed and wonderous one. They call on you, the bearer of oblations whose hair is flames.

I invoke Agni for you with this my reverent song, the son of strength, beloved, the wisest envoy, immortal, adored with oblations, the messenger of all.

We call on Agni, the immortal messenger, envoy and representative of all. He yokes his two ruddy steeds, all cherishing. He comes riding fast when invoked properly and reverently.

Let Agni be invoked and worshipped well. Let him be invited reverently. Then has the sacrificer proper end and happy performance and rich boons for the sacrificer.

O Agni, so of strength, all-knowing, lord of kine and wealth, grant us great riches, O Jatavedas.

O Agni, brilliant, wise, good, worthy of laud with our hymns shine on us, O of many forms, shine on us wealth.

O radiant one, shining by day, by night and morning, burn the wicked with your blazing flames you whose teeth are sharp like the bolt.

O adorable Agni, bring us bliss, may the sacrifice and the gifts bring us bliss, may our songs of praise bring us bliss, O invoked Agni!

The determined mind wherewith you subdue the foes in the war, show us that, that with which you conquer the enemy. May our prayers bring us bliss.

O Agni, wherewith you conquer the foe in the battle, therewith slacken the strings and destroy the bows of the mighty enemy. May we vanquish the foes with your aid.

I recognise Agni, the good lord of home, the fire to which the kine return, whom the courser seek as their home. Grant abundant food to those who are your devotees.

I laud god Agni, to whom the milch-kine return in herds, to whom the princes of royal birth come, to whom the fleet-footed coursers come. Grant abundant food to your devotees.

O pleasurable god Agni, you pour ghee within your mouth with both the ladles. So fill us also full with riches, O lord of might. Grant abundant food to your devotees.

Today we bring to offer you, O Agni, the things dear to you like a disciplined horse with reverence.

O Agni, you have ever been a great charioteer, full of pleasurable intellectual and physical strength, high sacrifice and proper judgement. So may we certainly be!

Being pleased with our hymns of praise come you unto us, O Agni, well disposed with your various aspects as does the Sun in the morning with all his rays.

I hold Agni, the son of strength, as learned Brahman who knows all the Vedas, the knower of all created beings, lord of sacrifice, a god with erect form, envoy of the gods, charitably disposed and the drinker of the sacred ghee offered in sacrifice.

O Agni, be our closest friend, our guard, liberator and a gracious friend. Come unto us, O god, with bliss and weal for our household, give us renowned wealth and splendid riches. We apporach you, O effulgent one, most radiant, with lauds for bliss and wealth.

With whatever fervour the sages came obtaining knowledge and kindled Agni at the place of sacrifice for bliss and true happiness, with that I establish Agni in heaven whom the learned and thoughtful men call as pervader of the atmospher.

O gods, let us adore Agni with our wives, sons, brothers, relatives and wearing gold ornaments so that we may attain the blissful, luminous realm of virtues, the world of heaven, high on the third height.

May this Agni, knower of the essence of the Vedic speech, lord of the heroes, protector of the virtuous, established on the earth, ever active, the effulgent one, cast under foot those who would fight against us.

May this Agni, most manly, bearer of oblations, doer of thousands of noble deeds, shining with never failing light, resplendent in the midst of heaven, shine and attain the divine dwellings.

O you all men, come near this Agni from all sides and attend him well. O Agni, light the pathways of godward travel and then rejuvenating the Fathers with life's vigour, extend fully through the sacrifice.

O Agni wake up and then keep the sacrificer awake and watchful. May his desires meet fruition with you grace. All the gods and this Sacrificer, in connection with you, may occupy the highest place here and hereafter in the loftiest realm.

O Agni bear our oblations and give them to the gods in heaven. Wherewith you carry a thousand, wherewith, O Agni, carry this our offering to heaven among the gods.

O Agni, this is your ordained home of birth, whence born you shone forth. Knowing this, Agni, rise you up and make our wealth to grow in all the ways.

Just as a horse desiring food neighs for fodder, so does Agni roar having sprung out from the fuel sticks. Then the winds blow in his wake. Black is the path that this splendrous Agni travels.

You illumine the heaven, the earth and the broad realm between them. You are luminous, I set you in Ayu's seat, in the shadow of the protector and in the heart, deep like the ocean.

O Agni, you are the measure of thousands of powers, you are the embodiment of thousands of splendours. You are equivalent of thousands of might. You are far better than the thousands. You are the lord of the thousands. I set you on the thousands!

Salutations be to the Rudra's wrath, salutations to your arrows, homage be to your twain arms.

With your gracious form, O gentle Rudra, pleasant to look on, with that most benign form look you on us, O Mountain-dweller!

O Mountain-dweller, whatever shaft you have in your hand to shoot, render that auspicious, Mountain-god, harm not man nor injure the moving things!

O Mountain-dweller, we salute you with our graceful hymns so that all our world be free from disease and well-satisfied!

The first divine physician and advocate, Rudra has saved us by crushing deadly serpents and by driving away fiends.

He, the most auspicious one, of coppery, red and brown hue, is surrounded by thousands of Rudras. May the wrath of these Rudras stationed on all sides be ever far removed from us.

May Rudra, who travels in the form of the Sun, whose throat is blue, whose hue is coppery-red, whom the herdsmen and maidens carrying water have seen, may he be auspicious to us when beheld.

Salutations be to him, the blue-throated, the thousand-eyed, the beautiful to look on, and also to his ministers, to them be our homage!

Loosen your bow-string, slacken it at both the extremities of the bow, put away the arrows that you hold in your hand, O lord of the matted locks!

O Lord of braided hair, let your bow be stringless, your quiver hold no sharp arrows. May arrows be driven away and your sheath that contained your sword be empty.

O blissful Rudra, protect us well on all sides with your weapon, with the bow that you hold in your hand, the *bow* harmless to us.

O thoususand-eyed, thousand-quivered Rudra, having blunted the points of your arrows, be benign and auspicious to us.

Obeisance be to your unstrung bow, homage be to your weapon. Salutations be to your two arms, and to your bow homage be!

Harm not, O Rudra, our elders and young ones, injure not our growing youths, harm not our children in the womb. Slay not our rearing sires, slay not the mothers, and harem not our own dear bodies.

Harm not our seed in embryo and our offspring, harm us not, our kine and steeds. Kill not our heroes in the fury of your wrath. We with oblations ever call on you.

Salutations to Rudra, the commander of the hosts, whose arms are gold-ornamented Salutations to him who is the lord of entire would. Homage be to him whose hair is green trees, whose sheen is like green grass, the lord of beasts. Salutations be to the brilliant lord of pathways, to the golden haired wearer of the sacred thread, homage be to the ageless lord of the healthy people.

Salutations be to brown-hued Rudra, the piercer of the foes, to the lord of food, to the lord protector of the world. Salutation to Rudra's weapons, salutation to him whose bow is bent in readiness, to the protector of the regions. Salutations to charioteer Rudra who harms none, to the lord of forests be salutations!

Salutations to the red-architect, to the protector of the trees. Salutations to Rudra, who expands the earth and giver of riches and splendour. Salutation to the lord of riches and splendour. Salutation to the lord of herbs and plants, to the sagacious tradesmen. Salutations to the lord of the bushes of the forest, to him who makes the wicked weep, to the shouting lord of hosts!

Salutations to Rudra, who rushes at the foe with the drawn bow for

our protection, to the lord of all believers. Salutations to the foe-conquering and enemy-slaying Rudra, to him who protects the heroic army. Salutations to the sword-bearer against the fiends, to the lord of persons serving in secret salutations be. Salutations to the wandering robbers and the roamers, to the protector of forest be salutations!

Homage to lord of assemblies and to the assemblies, homage to horses, and to you masters of the horses. Homage to the warrior hosts that pierce and slay the foe, to you killing armies with fine bands be homage!

Salutation to the bringer of weal, to the guard of the beings. Salutation be to the fierce and awe-inspiring. Salutations to him who slays the foe in front, to him who slays the foe at a distance. Salutations to the slayer and frequent slayer of the wicked. Salutations to the green-tressed trees, to the deliverer from distress be salutation.

Salutations to him who causes happiness, and to him who causes light. Salutations to the source of bliss and the source of joy, salutations to the auspicious one and to the most auspicious be salutations!

Salutations to him who is beyond suffering, and to one who is struggling for release. Salutations to him who crosses over and to him who crosses back. Salutations to him who is the ford, to him who dwells on the banks of rivers and shores of seas, to him who is in the grass and to him who is in the foam.

O distresser of the foe, the lord of corn, you cleaver, blue and red Rudra, slay none of these our people and children, none of these our people and children, none of these our cattle, nor make them deseased. Let none of us be sick!

We offer to the mighty Rudra of matted locks, these our songs of praise, the lord of heroes so that all our people and the cattle be happy, well-fed, healthy and free from distress and disease.

O Rudra, with that your auspicious aspect which heals and causes weal be gracious to us that we may be happy.

O Rudra, spare us and keep away your weapons from us, save us from your great fury of wrath. Turn aside your mighty bow from us, O Bounteous lord, and be auspicious to seeds and progeny.

O most bounteous, most gracious Rudra, be you gracious and well-disposed towards us. Approach us here skin-robbed, bearing your bow, and having laid down your weapon on some remotest tree.

O harm-remover, splendid and holy Rudra to you be salutations. May all those of your thousand weapons strike dead another than from us.

O lord of the splendour and the world, thousands and thousands are the weapons ready in your hands, turn their points away from us.

Countless, thousands are the Rudras on the face of this earth. Of these Rudras we send the weapons to places thousand leagues away.

Homage to Rudras whose abode is the heaven, whose arrows are floods of rain. To them ten east ward, southward ten, ten to the south, ten to the north, ten to the realm uppermost! To them be homage. May they protect and spare us. Within their jaws we put the man who dislikes us and whom we dislike.

O Maruts, so charitably disposed, grant us food and strength contained in stone and mountain and saps obtained from waters, herbs, plants and trees, that food and strength. O all-deveouring Agni, in the stone is your hunger, in me your food. Let that wrath of yours strike the man whom we detest!

O Agni, may these brick be my milch-kine, one and ten, and ten tens, a hundred, and ten hundred, a thousand and ten thousand and a hundred thousand, a lac and ten lacs, a million, and ten millions, a crore, ten crores, hundred crores, thousand crores, it is ten times mahapadma, it is ten times shankh, it is ten times mahapadma, it is ten times shankh, it is ten times samudra, it is ten times madhya, it is ten times prardh. O Agni, may these bricks of this alter be a source of bliss in this and the next world.

You are law-strengthening pleasant Spring season, set in the cycle of seasons. You fortify truth and are ghee-giving, bestowing sweet

sap, full of splendour, glorified, fulfiller of our desires and imperishable.

With ocean's cool mantling we robe you, Agni, be our purifier and auspicious to us.

We wrap you with snow's investing garb, Agni, be our purifier and auspicious to us.

Come you down on the earth, take the support of reeds, take abode in the rivers, because you are the essence of the waters. You also come here with them, female frog, and make this sacrifice of ours splendid and successful.

This place of Agni is the waters' meeting point, here meet the floods. Let your flames burn others than us, be our purifier and propitious to us!

O excellent cleanser, Agni, radiant one, bring here to our yajna and adore the gods, O pleasant tongued!

O pure, purifying, splendid god Agni, bring the gods to this our sacrifice, to our offerings bring the gods!

He who with purifying radiance has shone up on this earth like dawns with sun-light, who comes speeding like fleet coursers in the battle, ageless, who in the heat of battle tolerates thirst.

O Agni, salutations to your flame that attracts all the saps, salutations to your blazing fire. Let your flame burn others than us, be you our purifier and propitious to us!

To Agni who abides in man, Hail! To Agni who abides in the holy sacrificial grass, Hail! To him who abides in the trees, Hail. And this Agni who is known as the Sun, to him, Hail!

O Agni, you are the giver of vital breath, of our breath and diffusive breath. You are giver of wealth and power. Let your weapons distress others than us. Be you our purifier and propitious to us!

May Agni destroy all the devouring fiends with his sharp blazing flames. May Agni grant us riches and splendour.

He who protects all, dissolves all the worlds at he time of final dissolution, sat down as Hotarpriest, our Father, the sage, is every present. With his grace he fulfils all our wishes, pervades the subtle primordial matter and the world created therefrom.

What was the support before this creation? What was it that propped him? What was its nature? Whence Vishvakarman, the seer of all, creating the earth, with boundless power produced the heavens?

He has eyes in all directions, mouths on all sides, arms and feet on all sides. He, the only one, has produced heaven and earth with the might of his arms and put them in motion.

Let the learned men enquire within their soul what was the cause, what the resultant creation? From what the heaven and earth were created? Whereupon he stood when he shaped all the objects?

Whatever your highest, lowest, midmost deeds and places are, O Vishvakarman, the creator of the universe, reveal them all to us, your friends at sacrifice and come yourself to our yajama.

O Vishvakarman be pleased with my oblation and come to the sacrifice with heaven and earth, come to our worship. May our enemies be ever in confusion and here may we have a rich and generous portion1

When the father Vishvakarman created both heaven and earth, and extended for both of them fastening securely their eastern ends, then he, the lord of eye and light, submerged these in saps.

Vishvakarman, the creator of the whole universe, is all-seeing, most excellent, full of deep know ledge, mighty, creator, disposer and without second. In him the sould, controlling their seven senses including mind and intellect live in enjoyment according to their desires. Let us all worship him.

He is our father, he created us. He as the sustainer knows all races and all things existing. He is the name-giver of all the gods. He is one, him alone all seek for knowledge.

The ancient seers and rishis offered him their treasures with their their songs of praise sung in groups, him who in the highest, lowest

and the mid-region created all things that have existence.

He was there before this earth and heaven, and before gods and demons came into being. What was the first germ that waters received, where the gods beheld that primeval element?

The waters received that primeval germ where the gods lived together. Indeed there in the navel of the unborn is that supreme primeval element from which all things spring up and in which they exist.

O men, you know not him who has created all creatures and worlds, he is different and another and yet pervades you all. You are enwrapped is mist of ignorance, engaged in fruitless discussions and controversies, preoccupied with fulfilment of carnal wishes, hymn-singers, wandering, confused and discontent.

Firsts of all came the God, Vishvakarman, then secondly was the Sun created, who sustains the kine and the earth. Thirdly was born the cloud in succession, that quickened the germ in waters and preserves the herbs.

Terrific like the bull, swift in striking the foes, who keeps his weapons sharpened, who does not even wink, causer of distress to the enemy, the sole hero, Indra subdued at once the hundred armies the arouser of the people.

O warriors, with him as helper, the loud-roaring, alert, invincible, ever victorious, rouser of battles, Indra, the mighty, bearer of arrows, now win the opposing army.

Indra, the master of his passions, girt with arrow and quiver-bearing warriors, foe-subduing, keeper of stores of arms and weapons, strong in arms, the Soma-enjoyer, fond of battle with sharp shafts, rulers over all.

O Brihaspte, you are the slayer of demons. Guard you our chariots, O chariot-borne, destroyer, victor, breacher of enemy forces!

O Indra, master commander of the forces, experienced hero, lord of all, passing mighty, conqueror of the foes, fierce in battle, accompanied by the heroes, far-famed for strength, kine-winner, mount your conquering chariot!

O Indra, O Brihaspati, you are the warder and commander of these foe-destroying, battle-winning divine armies. Let Soma and the Maruts, the leaders of big bands, march in front of these heavenly hosts that destroy and demolish.

Ours is the powerful army of mighty Indra, king Varuna, the Maruts and the Adityas. The soaring roar of the winning gods, the highly learned ones, has caused the worlds to quake.

O Maghavan, excite the spirit of our warring heroes, make their weapons flourish, urge to speed the strong steeds, O Vritra- slayer, and let the din of conquering cars soar skyward!

May Indra aid us when our flags flutter high in the battle, may the arrows of our army be victorious. May our heroes enjoy triumph. May all the gods protect us everywhere during the war!

The forces of our enemy that is coming against us with its full might, O Maruts, meet and enwrap it in thick darkness of that they may not recognise one another.

O Agni, well satisfied with ghee, lead this man to high position, grant him increase in riches and multiply his progeny!

Indra, lead this man to prominence. May he possess control over his foes. Grant him glory, let him offer their due share to the god!

May Indra prosper him in whose house we perform sacrifice. May the gods and Brahmanaspati bless and comfort him.

O Agni, all the gods bear and uplift you high according to their wisdom. May you so famed, rich in splendour, be auspicious to us.

Surya, the golden-hued, flame-haired, preserver of all, the bright fire, has appeared high in the east. He, the guardian of the righteous, nourishing and knowing his own virtues travels surveying all the worlds.

He sits in the midst of heaven, the measurer, flooding the earth, sky and air's mid-region with light. He looks upon the far- extending fertile pastures between the eastern and western limits.

The same Sun who pours down the rain, is red when rising in the east, pervades the heaven, marches through the sky, is set amidst

the space, lord of the innumerable rays, measurer of the sky, has attained the abode of the Primeval Father.

All the sages glorify Indra, vast as the space the best of car-bone heroes, the lord, the very lord of strength.

May Indra, the lord of food and riches lift me up through elevation, and with his subjugating might keep my foemen down!

May the gods increase our powers of uprising and knowledge and also the power of foe's depression and punishment. May Indra, may Agni drive away my foe-men in every direction.

I have ascended the heaven from the earth, and from mid-region I have mounted up the heaven. From heaven's high and happy region I have attained the world to eternal light.

The sages attain God, the sustainer of the world, through the sacrifice. On their march to heaven they look not round, but rise to salvation that releases them from the cycel of birth and death.

O Agni, you are thousand-eyed and hundred-headed. You are possessed of hundred breaths and thousand through-breaths. To you, the lord of thousand fold riches, we offer our oblations of power.

You are a bird of fine wings and so well seated on the earth. Fill the space with you light, and fill the sky with you glow. Flood the quarters with your sheen.

I solicit god Savitar's wonderous wisdom desired by all, good for all mankind and cause of this world's creation. The sages like Kanva milked this mighty thousand-streamed milch-cow of Savitar.

We worship Agni of the loftiest birth and offer him oblation with hymns of praise in his lower station. I worship the place whence you have sprung out, and offer oblations having enkindle you well.

O most youthful Agni, first enkindled with reverence, shine in front of us constantly, never fading our and we shall offer you sacred oblations without stop.

I offer the oblation of shee with a contemplative mind so that the

gods may arrive who love oblations, the strengthners of truth. I pour oblations day after day to Vishvakarman, the lord creator of all.

O Agni, you have seven kinds of fuel, seven tongues of flame, the seven rishis have envisioned you, you have seven beloved mansions of verse and seven priests in sevenfold sacrifice pay you homage. Seven are your places of birth, fill these full with ghee, Svaha!

Forth from the ocean sprung the watery wave of sweetness with the stalk, it turned into Amrita, that which is ghee's secret title, which truly gods' tongue and Amrit's navel.

We utter the name of ghee aloud in this yajna and bear the sacrifice with oblation. So let the four hotar-priests hear this praise of ghee that expresses the fruit of sacrifice through oblation.

Udgatar, Hotar, Adhvaryu and Brahman, the four priests are the four horns of this sacrifice, Rik, Yaju and Saman are his three feet, his heads are two and his seven heads are the seven verses. Bound in triple bond the Bull roars loudly. The most adorable god has entered the world of mortals.

These many kinds of ghee-streams flow forth from the innermost reservoie of heart which the foe does not behold. I look upon the golden Agni amidst these streams.

Like streams flow together unceasingly our oblations, purifying themselves in the innermost reservoir of heart. These streams of oblations flow swifity to the sacrifice as do the wild beasts fly before a hunter.

Just as the high-born ladies at a fair look on and gently smiling, incline towards their husbands, so do these streams of holy ghee reach the sacrificial fuel and Iatvedas happily receive them.

Just as maidens adorn themselves with gay ornaments to join the bridal feast, so do the streams of sacred ghee flow down where Soma is poured and sacrifice is performed.

O gods, send to our lands riches and cattle, and convey our oblations of streaming ghee, pure and sweet to heaven.

Oh Agni, this universe depends on your sustaining power, Whatever your loftiest form is there within the ocean, within the heart, within life and within sacrifice, that sweet, enlightening and blissful wave of yours may we obtain!

May my corn and my wealth, my best efforts and my mind, my thought and power of action, may my speech and my praise, my power of hearing, and my light, my spiritual power prosper by this sacrifice.

May my inhalation and exhalation, my through-breathing and my other breaths, my thought power and my knowledge, my speech and my mind, my eye and my ear, my skill and my strength prosper by this sacrifice.

May my energy and my tolerance, my soul-power and my body, my happiness and my armour, my limbs and my bones, my joints and my members, my health and long life prosper by this sacrifice.

May my pre-eminece, and my ownership, my courage and my wrath against the wicked, my seriousness and my life-force, my victorious power and my importance, my dignity and my breadth, my long life and my greatness, my old age and progress prosper by this sacrifice.

May my truth and my faith, my cattle and my wealth, my portion and my greatness, my plag and my pleasure, my son and my future son, my hymn and my rites prosper by this sacrifice.

May my simple acts and my immortality, my freedom from consumption and my health, my medicine and my long life, my freedom from enemy and my fearlessness, my joys and my rest, my fair dawn and fair evening and my fair day prosper by this sacrifice.

May my leader and my supporter, my security and my patience, my goods and my capability, my knowledge and discretion, my command and my propagation, my plough and my harrow prosper through this sacrifice.

May my Agni and my Indra, my Soma and my Indra, my Savitar and my Indra, my Sarasvati and my Indra, my Pushan and my

Indra, my Brihaspati and my Indra's favour prosper by this sacrifice.

May my Mitra and my Indra, and my Varuna and my Indra, and my Indra, and my Dhatar and my Indra, and my Tvashtar and my Indra, and my Maruts and my Indra, and my Vishvadevas and my Indra prosper by this sacrifice.

May my vows and my seasons, and my fervour and my year, and my day night and my thighs and knees and Rathantara Soma prosper by this sacrifice.

May all the Maruts come unto us today. Let all guardian gods come to our sacrifice to protect us. Let all the Agnis be kindled well. May we gain all wealth and riches.

O Agni, with the milk of the earth and such other saps I unite me, unite myself with waters and herbs. As such I gain nourishment from herbs and waters.

The protector of all the subjects, creator of all the beings, mind is the Gandharva. May he guard or Brahmans, and Nobles, Svaha! The widh-fulfilling Richas and Samans, his Apasaras my protect us, Svaha!

O Prajapati, lord of the world, you are the prop of the homes above and here, grant protection to these our Brahmans and Nobles.

O Maruts, you are deep and Vapory like the sea, you are the source of rain pouring down on the earth and the blessing arising thereform. You are the heaven-wandering Maruts, blow on me food, riches, weal and release from bonds. May I attain you from all sides. Svaha!

O Agni, grant glory to our Brahmans, set lustre in our Kshatriyas, lustre in our Vaishyas, and in our Shudras, and in me establish lustre.

O Varuna, with my songs of praise I beg this of you, your devotee begs this of you with oblation. Abide with us and get not angry. Do not decrease our age, O vast one!

I unite Agni with ghee, the possessor of divine virtues, fair of

speed, great and mighty. Through him we shall reach the world of Aditya and then sacen to the loftiest realm of heaven.

O Agni, both of these your wings are never wasting, wherewith you fly ever and destroy the fiends. Through them may we fly to the realms of the pious souls where have gone the first-borne Sages.

O Agni, fill the earth full with sap, fill the herbs with sap, fill the heaven with sap, fill the space with sap, full with milk make all the regions for me.

By the impulse of Savitar, with arms of Ashvins, with the hands of Pushan, with the speech of goddess Sarasvati, with the law of Prajapati and with Agni's sole dominion I anoint you.

Agni is maintainer of law, practiser of truth, the sustainer of earth, destroyer of the foe, protector of priest and warrior classes. For his pleasure we offer this oblation, may he accept it graciously. May these herbs the Apsaras of Gandharva Agni, protect and guard us. Svaha!

The Sun who conjoins day and night, lauded by the Saman, sustainer of the earth, may protect our priest and warrior classes. This oblation is for him. May his rays, the uniting and life-giving Apsaras guard us well. Svaha!

The high-mined Moon, who receives light from the Sun, is the Gandharava. May he protect our Brahmans and Kshatriyas. The bright stars of constelation Asterism are his Apsaraa. May they protect as. All hail to them!

All-pervading and quick-reaching Wind is the Gandharva. The Waters and Saps which sustain life, are his Apsaras. May they guard us. All hail to them!

O Agni, you are pleasurable like the moon, you are like falcon in speed,righteous in conduct, fair-pinioned, mighty, firm, settled, established in sacrifice and nourisher of all. Homage be to you Harm us not!

O Agni, you are head and height of heaven, naval of the earth, esence of the waters and of the herbs. Life of all the beings you are, blissgiving, and omnipresent. Homage be to you, the path and

Destination of all.

O omnipresent you are placed at the head of the world; you heart is in the sea, your life is in the waters. Guard us by giving waters. Pour rain by cleaving the clouds.

May Agni, satisfied with oblations, fulfil all our desires. May this oblation quickly reach the gods.

The knowledge which has arisen either from exertion or from judgement, to obtained from soul-force, or from the meditation, or from mind, eyes or ears, hold fast to it so that you may follow the path of salvation along which have gone the first-born ancient sages.

O gods, dwelling in the loftiest heaven, to you I trust this sacrificer. I offer you the fruit of this sacrifice. After you will the Sacrificer follow. Here know him in this vast and loftiest heaven.

Recognise this Sacrificer, O gods, dwelling in the loftiest heaven. Know him well and his form. When he follows the gods' pathway, reveal to him the fruits of righteous action!

May Agni, Vishvakarman's own, establish us among the gods in heaven, where the streams of honey, milk and ghee flow unceasing.

Agni I am, the knower of all the created things, adorable in the form of sacrifice, immortal. My eye is ghee, in my mouth is nectar. I am the Rik, Yaju and Sama, the creator of the three realms, immortal heat I am and conveyor of burnt offerings.

I am triple-vidya of the vedas in name. You are the best of the five Agnis found among the five races of men for their weal. Speed us on lengthened life.

O Indra, the slayer of the foes, conqueror of the armies, we call on you again and again for power and strength.

Like a dreadful wild beast roaming in the mountains, you have come unto us, O Indra, from the farthest land. Now encircle our foes and crush the enemies, whetting your sharp thunderbolt, and scatter all those who detest us!

Come, O Agni, come to guard us from the distant land. Come

Vaishvanara, to listen to our beautiful hymns of praise!

Agni has entered all, he has entered the sky, the earth, the air and the sun All herbs he has entered. May that Agni, pervading all, preserve us all day and night from harm.

O Agni, help us that we may have our desire fulfilled, obtain hero-sons and the best riches, O wealthy one! Waging war with the enemy may we be victorious and enriched. O Ageless, may we attain your eternal glory!

O Agni, approaching you with folded and raised hands, we have this day fulfilled your longing. With contemplative mind and devoted spirits, with no unfriendly thought, O Agni, worship the gods!

Sweet with the sweet, I mix you with Soma, strong with the strong, Amirit with Amrit, the honeyed-sap with sap that is sweet as honey. O Sura, you are Soma. Drass up yourself for the Ashvins, dress up for Sarasvati, dress up for Indra, the protector!

Soma is the best sacrificial food. Pour you forth the flowing one, the friend of human-beings, cleansed with the waters, and expressed with stones.

Purified by Vayu's strainer, the swift flowing Soma is Indra's intimate friend. Purified by Vayu's strainer, the Soma that has passed away backward is Indra's intimate friend.

O Soma, you are attainable through yamas and niyamas, this my heart is your place. You possess Ashvin's splendour, Sarasvat's vigour and Indra's might. I take you for enjoyment, I take you for delight and take you for greatness.

You are lustre, give me lustre. You are manly vigour, give me manly vigour. You are strength. give me strength, you are energy, give my energy. You are righteous wrath, give me righteous wrath. You are foe-conquering strength, give me fore-conquerling strength.

I bruised my mother in delight when as a boy I sucked her breast. With that debt I become free from my mother. May my parents be unharmed and happy me. You are all my associates, as such unite

me with bliss, you are free from sin, let me be free from sin.

The divine physicians, the twain Ashvins, stretched out the healing sacrifice, and Sarasvati the physician with speech invested Indra with all hero-powers.

The twain Ashvins are the Soma-store, Sarasvati the sacred hearth. For Indra there is his seat, the apacious hall, the Sacrificer's house.

The morning sacrifice is performed with the Ashvins, the mid-day libation with Indra, the evening one with Sarasvati with oblations very dear to the Vishvadevas.

The gods and the Brahmans have explained the form of sacrifice so far. All that one gains in the Sautramani rite when Soma is shed and expressed.

The learned priests promote the sacrificial rite with food, sacred grass, Some-juice, and host of heroes. May we also be happy, doing righteous deeds and offering libations to Indra with gods.

The Soma-juice which the twain Ashvins brought from demon Namuchi and which Sarasvati prepared and poured out for Indra, that sweet, honeyed, brilliant juice I drink here in this sacrifice.

Whatever portion of this savoury juice is clinging here, what Indra drank with his powers, I drink and feed on that sparkling juice, with a pure mind.

O Agni, you prolong life, pour down on us food and vigorous strength. Drive you afar from us the gang of evil-doers.

O learned ones, cleanse me, make my mind, intellect and spirit clean. May all beings purify me. May Jatavedas, the all-knowing, purify me!

O Agni, effulgent one, purify me with your sacred bright fire and then purify our sacrifice!

May Pavamana, the all-knowing, ever pure and purifying others, cleanse us today, he who is purifier, render us pure.

O god Savitar, impeller of all, purify me from all sides with both of your forms and through this sacrifice.

I have heard the mention of tow pathways of mortal men, the way of the Fathers and the way of gods. One of these two paths each moving one travels, each being leaves its present parents and gets new ones.

May this my oblation cause the birth of the best progeny. May this bring ten brave sons, all fine things, physical strength, good children, cattle, fearlessness, peace and power for our weal. O Agni, confer on us food, milk and manly strength and render my progeny abundant.

Our reverend ancient Fathers Angirases, Navagvas, Atharavans, Bhrigus deserve Soma. May we follw the path of these adorable ancients, and enjoy their loving gracious favour!

Our ancient Fathers, deserving Soma, may come again and again to our sacrifice and with them let Yama happily enjoy our oblations at his will.

O Soma, you are pre-eminent for wisdom. With your wisdom you follow the straight path of gods as our leader. O Soma, our learned ancient Fathers by your wisdom and guidance obtained the best treasures among the gods.

Associating with the Fathers, O Soma, spread our yourself abroad between heaven and earth. Therefore, let us serve you, O Indu, and let us be lord of the wealth.

O Fathers, sitting on best seats and the highest positions, these oblations we offer you, accept them and come here to help us. Come here unto us with auspicious favour, peace, happiness, and protection. Remove whatever sin and distress are within us.

I know the blissful Fathers, so knowledgeful and protector. I know the all-pervading God's immortal varied creation. May those visit this our place, who wholly dedicated to God, with their life force enjoy the nectar of self-realization.

May the ancient Fathers, worthy of Soma, invited to their loved sacrifice, come here and listen our speech. May they enlighten us with their teachings and protect us.

O you all Fathers, harm us not for any sin which we might have

committed through human frailty. Bowing down with the bent knees and seated on the right side we pay you homage. Accept our homage with favour.

O Fathers, grant riches to the charitably disposed men and your sons sitting beside their fair mothers. Give them a portion of your riches so that they may thereby gain energy.

O kvyahana Agni, bearer of best things to the wise, grant us that supreme wealth which you through praiseworthy speech consider fit to be granted to the wise.

Now let us offer oblations to the Fathers, to those advanced in age and wisdom and to those who followed them, to those who are engrossed in the worldly affairs and to those who dwell among the men of lofty character.

O Agni, as in the ancient days our Fathers, holy, devoted to truth, spreading knowledge, sang hymns of praise and acquired radiant wives and ground to live on, so should you remove ignorance and cast away the darkness.

You are the birth-place of princely power, you are centre of royal power. Let none harm you, do not harm me!

By the impulse of god Savitar, with arms of Ashvins, with the hands of Pushan and with the healing powers of Ashvins, I anoint you for splendour, and the glory of a Brahman. With the healing ppwers of Sarasvati, I anoint you for gaining food and might. I anoint you by might of Indra for gaining wealth, fame and physical strength.

Let my head be grace, my mouth be fame, my hair and bear full of brilliant sheen, my breath be light and deathlessness, my eye the king, my ear the prince.

May my tongue be bliss, my voice be power, my mind the righteous wrath, my intellect self-illumined. May joy be my fingers, delight my limbs and conquering strength my friend!

May my two arms be Indra's might, my hands be deeds of heroisim, my soul and heart a shield against attack.

My ribs by my government, my belly, shoulders, neck, hips, thighs, elbows, knees and all other members of the body my subjects.

I take my stand on princely power and kingship, on horse I am dependent, and on kine. On members I depend, on body I depend. On vital breath I am dependent, on welfare, on heaven, on earth and on sacrifice do I depend.

Whatever disrespect or fault of ours, those of others has caused your wrath, O gods, may Agni set me free from all that iniquity and fault.

If during the day or in the night I have done any act of sin, may Vayu set me free from that iniquity and fault.

If when awake or in our sleep we have committed acts of sin, may Surya set me free from that iniquity and fault.

Each fault done in a village or in forest, in society or mind, each sinful act that we have committed to Shudra or Vaishya or by preventing a religious act, even of that sin, you are the expiation!

May pure water cleans me from my acts of sin just as one released from the stake, or a person is cleansed by bathing after toil, or as ghee is purified through a sieve.

May we be weaned away from darkness by looking upon the loftier light that is most excellent.

O Agni, today I have sought waters and have united with htir sap and thereafter have come to you. O Agni, grant me glory, wealth and progeny.

That society I regard as the perfect where work the Brahmans and the Nobles in ideal harmony, and where the gods and Agni together dwell.

Fain would I know the holy land where want and langour are not known, where in complete harmony do move Indra and Vayu side by side.

Let your soul be yoked with God, let each of your joints be full of vigour. Let the imperishable joy be yours and let your noble nature be the Soma's guard.

Chant your lofty lauds to Indra, to Maruts, to him, the best Vritra-slayer, whereby the gods created the Sun of radiant light that never fades.

He is the sovereign lord of all living beings upon whom the world depends. He is mighty, the mighty king. I accept you by his might and place you in my heart.

With the Sun kindled in forefront of the Mornings, with forward light, ever active, growing strong, and with thirty-three gods, Indra, the Thunder-wielder, passing mighty, may approach our sacrifice rejoicing.

May Indra, lord of bay steeds, full of rays, vast in extent, besprinkled by the Adityas and the Vasus, full, of expanse, occupy his seat in the east on earth and accept our burnt offerings.

Just as the child-bearing, goodly dames apprach their heroic husband through open portals moving swiftly, so should the armies full of heroic warriors, yoked with might stand on all sides of Indra of manly strength and subdue the foemen.

The fair and lovely Dawn and Night, full of sap, rich-yielding, lofty ones, as they weave their long-extended thread of varied colour, adore Indra, the great, mighty, go of gods.

May Indra lauded here, fearless and heroic come to us for our protection, and be our friend. May he whose powers are diverse, grow in strength, like the Sun to subdue the foes.

May Indra, come for protection from near or a far away place, fulfiller of desires, lord of the excellent might, guardian of mankind, thunderbolt-wielder, slayer of the foes in the battles.

May Indra come to us riding his bay steeds, the gracious one, to favour us with wealth and protection. May Maghavan abide by us in our sacrifice and in this performance of Prajapati.

I invoke Indra, Indra the protector I call in every sacrifice. Indra the mighty, worthy to be invoked reverently, Indra adored by many. May Indra come to us and bless with riches and prosperity.

May Indra, the best protector, accompanied by excellent heroes,

lord of wealth, prosper us with food and happiness. May Indra, the king grant food and happiness. May Indra, the king render us all fearles and baffle the foemen and there by may we be the lords of vigour.

The sage Vashishtha praised Indra with hymns, the mighty, the thunder-armed. May he, adored and prayed, protect our kine and heroes. O you gods, preserve us evermore with your blessings.

O you both Ashvings, the bright and radiant Agni has been kindled, Soma has been pressed out and the milch-cow Sarasvati, the bestower of the best things, has poured forth the sparkling juice, Indra's own.

Protect us by day O Ashvins, protect us by night, O you Sarasvati. O divine priests, O physicians, both of you guard Indra in accord when Soma is expressed.

The Ashvins and Sarasvati united together made Indra wax strong with oblations, who slew demon Vala with Namuchi of Asura birth.

Waxing him mighty with sacred oblations and burnt offerings, Sarasvati and the twain Ashvins sang Indra's songs of praise.

The great protector Indra snatched away by force power, strength and wealth from Namuchi, and Savitar and Varuna bestowed boons of strength and wealth on the liberal sacrificer.

May both the Ashvins, fair of form, the doer of righteous deeds, knowledge-bestowing Sarasvati and the foe-slaying Indra, help us in our sacrifices.

O Agni, we pour sacred oblation into your mouth as Soma into a receptacle and ghee into a ladle. Vouchsafe us riches, strength-winning, blessed with heroes, lofty wealth, full of glory lauded by men.

O twain Ashvins, wedded to truth, O Rudra, come to this house with kine and horses, the sure protectors of this sacrificer.

O longed-for Ashivins, lead us on to wealth, full of shining gold and service.

May Sarasvati, pure and purifying, rich in food and wisdom, promote our sacrifice.

She, the inspirer of truthful speech, awakener of the best intellect Sarasvati, protects our sacrifice.

Sarasvati, rich in knowledge, illuminates the vast ocean of learning and the pious thoughts.

O Indra, wonderously bright, come and enjoy these libations so enjoyable, prepared and purified by these fingers.

Well-urged by the holy singer, sped by the sage, come here, O Indra, to the hymns of oblation-offering priest!

O Varuna hear this my prayer, be ever gracious unto us. Longing for help I yearn for you.

O all-knowing, most adored, Agni, oblation-bearer, effulgent, put away far from us Varuna's displeasure, god, remove from us far away those who hate us.

Be you the closest unto us, O Agni, our bosom friend while now this rich dawn is breadking. Reconcile Varund to us, be bounteous and grant us your compassion and listen our prayers quickly.

We call on Mother Aditi, the womb of those who steadfastly observe their vows, protector from various attacks, ageless, the promoter of truth, the form of happiness, we invoke the boundless Mother for our protection.

May we ascend this vessel for our weal, flawless, divine, rowed with fine oars, vast and all-accommodating, comfortable, never leaking and built by master builders.

O Varuna, O Mitra, you gracious pair, sprinkle our pasturage with rich sap. and with honey, the realms of the air.

O Mitra-Varuna, ever youthful, stretch your arms hearing my prayer and let our span of life be extended, sprinkle the posture of our cattle with sap and make me glorious in the world.

May Agni, well kindled with fuel, bright, excellent, and adorable, and the Gayatri verse grant power, long life, kine and riches.

The two Dawns of great splendour, all the immortal gods, the Trishtup verse and the bull that carries burden on his back, here in this sacrifiece grant us strength and long life!

Agni and mid-Air, the two divine Hotar-priests, the twin Physicians, Indra's own friends, agant us strenght and long life!

The Earth, Sarasvati and the three intellects, the Maruts, a milch-cow, the metre Viraj and a bull grant us strength and long life!

The eight Vasus, praised with triple Stoma, and Rathantara slong with Spring season and gods, grant us long life and splendour in the light of Indra!

May Rudras with Summer season, and gods, lauded in Panchadash Stoma of fifteen verse Brihat grant us strength, long life and fame in Indra!

May the Adityas with the Rainy Season and gods lauded in Saptadash Stoma of seventeen verses Virupa with folk, grant us manly strength, longevity and sacrifice in Indra!

May the Maruts with Autumn Season and gods, praised in a hymn of twenty-seven verses, the Sakvaris, grant us longevity, strength and sacrifice in Indra!

Sarasvati offered the seat of sacred grass to Indra, the divine and virtuous, the two Ashvins gave Indra splendour, like brilliance of the eyes, for gain of wealth, and performed sacrifice to honour Indra, so should you perform the sacrifice.

The celestial Doors, the twain Ashvins, the Physicians and Sarasvati gave breath into Indra's nostrils and manly strength for gain of wealth and performed the yajna, so should you perform the sacrifice.

Just as the beautiful Dawn and Night, the goddesses, the two Ashvins and Sarasvati gave strength and speech in the mouth of Indra for gain of wealth and performed yajna, so should you perform the sacrifice.

Just as both the nursing goddesses Morning and Evenings, both the

Ashvins and goddess Sarasvati making Indra grow strong gave him fame and power for gain of wealth and performed yajna, so should you perform the sacrifice.

Just as the two goddesses, well yielding cows, divine Sarasvati, the healing Physicians, the two Ashvins formed Indra's guards and from their breasts through sacrifice gave him strength and brilliant light for gain of wealth, so should you by sacrifice.

Today this man, the Sacrificer cooking oblations, cooking oblations, cooking sacrificial food, binding to the sacrificial post a goat for the Ashvins, a ram for the Sarasvati, a bull for Indra's love, pressing out Soma-juice for the Ashvins, Sarasvati and Indra, the best protector, has chosen Agni as his Hotar- priest.

Today the god of Herbs has rendered a good service to the Ashvins with a goat, to Sarasvati with a ram and to Indra with a bull. The gods have accepted the sacrifice, they have accepted the cooked offerings and have grown strong with these oblations. They, Sarasvati, Ashvins and Indra have enjoyed the Soma juices.

O Seer, foremost of the Seers, descendant of the seers, this Sacrificer has you today, of the all the gods assembled here together saying that you shall, O Agni, win for him by sacrifice the choice- worthy treasures among the gods. O god Agni, whatever gifts the gods have given, kindly you do approve and grant. O Hotar Agni, you have been sent as a man, selected and sent for benediction, for good speech, speak god words!

You are effulgence, you are splendour, immotal, and protector of life, therefore, protect my life. I accept you by impulse of god Savitar, with the arms of Ashvins and the hands of Pushan.

In this Soma-sacrifice is present with us this girdle, which our ancient seers assumed in religious rites in the beginning, declaring the relation between the Primordial Cause and the created things.

O God, you are famous, you are the universe, you are the controller and sustainer of all the worlds. You, Sacrificer go and consecrate by Svaha to Agni Vaishavanara of vast fame.

We contemplate the divine virtues of god Savitar with our mind so

that he may stimulate our thoughts.

I invoke for protection the effulgent, all-creating god Savitar. He knows all, stimulate all and is refuge of all the gods.

We invoke and praise the all-creating god Savitar, the all-seeing to obtain the lofty wisdom wherewith to discriminate truth from untruth.

Having eulogised Savitar, the creator of the universe, we seek his gifts in riches, who knows all our desires.

I invocate the liberal-giver Savitar, protector of the men devoted to the vows, full of splendour on all sides, the god Savitar, the cheerer of the gods' feast.

The procimity of god Savitar cheers the company of the gods, with prayer we desire riches from him.

Agni well kindled with hymns of praise conveys our oblations to the gods. O Adhvaryu, awake Agni well, the deathless god!

The oblation-bearer, immortal, wise, messenger of the gods and auspicious Agni, approaches us with the thought.

I place Agni in front, the oblation-bearer, envoy of gods and him here I address. Here let him make the gods sit.

O all-prevading and purifying Pavamana, you have verily generated the Sun and sustain waters with their strength and abundant vivifying milk in the kine.

O horse, you are mighty by your mother, eminent by your father. You are indeed a horse, you are a courser, giver of pleasure, slayer of the foe, you are a yoke-horse, you are splendid, you are manly-minded. You are called Vayu and Shishu. Follow the path of the Adityas. O gods, possessed of divine virtues, O Guardians of the Quarters, protect this sacrificial, anointed horse for the gods. Here is delight, here is pleasure, here is contentment and here is self-satisfaction.

Hail to Prajapati, hail to Prajapati the foremost, hail to Prajapati, the supreme, this is for Prajapati, this is for the Adityas who know our mind! Hail to Aditi, hail to bliss-giving Aditi! Hail to Sarasvati!

Hail to puriffying Sarasvati! Hail to mighty Sarasvati! Hail to Pushan! Hail to Pushan of the excellent objects! Hail to Pushan the sustainer and noruisher of man-kind! Hail to Tvashtar! Hail to Tvashtar, the guardian of speed! Hail to Tvashtar of many forms. Hail to Vishnu! Hail to Vishnu, ever protected and ever protecting! Hail to Vishnu who in subtle form pervades all!

O Brahman, let there be born Brahmans in the land, illustrious for their Vedic knowledge, let there be born the Princes, heroic, skilled archer, piercing the foemen with darts, mighty heroes, the kine rich in milk, the ox good at carrying burden, the fleet courser, the woman skilled in household work. Let Prajanya pour forth rain as we desire, let our fruit-bearing trees ripen, let acquisition and preservation of property be secured for us.

Hail to Madhu, the month of Chaitra! Hail to Madhava, the month of Vaisakh! hail to Shukra, the month of Purifying Jeystha! Hail to Nabhas, the month of Ashadha! Hail to Nabhashya, the month of Shravana! Hail to Isha, the month of Bhadrapada! Hail to Urija, the month of Kartika! Hail to Sahas, the month of Agahan! Hail to Sahashya, the month of Pausha! Hail to Tapas, the month of Magha! Hail to Tapasya, the month of Falgun! Hail to amhasaspati, the intercalary or the thirteenth month!

May life increase by sacrifice, Hail! May breath improve by sacrifice, Hail! May downward breath, diffusive breath, upward breath and breath digestive thrive by sacrifice, Hail! May vision, hearing, speech, mind, soul, self-devotion, light heaven, hymns and sacrifice succeed, all Hail!

Hail to the only One! Hail to the Two, Purusha and Prahriti! Hail to Hundred! Hail to Hundred and one! Hail to Daybreak! Hail to Bliss!

Who by his grandeur has become the sole Ruler and Sovereign of the moving world that breaths and slumbers, he, the God is Sovereign lord of these men and cattle. Let us adore with devotion, him, the embodiment of bliss!

You are realisable by efforts, I accept you, O Prajapati as protector, this is your piace. The Moon is your greatness. Your majesty can

be seen reflected in the night and the year. This majesty can be seen in the Earth and Agni, in the stars and the Moon. Hail to your majesty, O Prajapati, and to the gods, all Hail!

They steadfast and free from anger, move about performing sacrifice and yoke their mighty sun-like souls to God. The lights shine in the sky.

Just as they yoke on both sides of the chariot two beautiful steeds, tawny, stout, bearer of the rider from one place to another, so do the sages yoke their sense-organs, soul and the vital breath to God.

When the horse, swift like wind, has reached the beautiful form that Indra loves, and the waters, O singer of hymn, by this path bring you back our Steed here.

May the Vasus besprinkle you with Gayatri verse, may the Rudras anoint you with Trishtup Verse. May the Adityas besprinkle you with Jagati verse. Eat you this food cooked from barley, from cow's milk and its products, O Earth, Ether, Heaven and gods, enjoy this food, O Prajapati!

Who moves singly and alone? Who is brought forth to life again? What is the cure of cold? What is the great field for growing?

The Sun moves singly and alone, the Moon is brought forth to life again. Fire is the cure of cold, Earth is that great field.

What was the thought in the beginning? What was the bird of the mighty size? Who was she, the slippery matron? Who absorbs light?

Heaven was the primary thought, the steed was the mighty bird. The Earth is the slippery matron. Night absorbs all light and forms.

Agni was all-seeing, with him they performed sacrifice. He won this world in which Agni is. This world shall be your place of refuge, this you shall win. Drink these saps for this. Vayu was all-seeing with him they performed sacrifice. He won this world in which Vayu is. This shall be your place of refuge, this you shall win. Breathe you these vayus. Surya was all-seeing, with him the gods sacrificed. He won this world in which Surya is. This world shall be you refuge, this you shall win. Enjoy you, these beams of

the Sun!

We invoke you, troop-lord of troops. We invoke you the lord of the beloved ones. We call you the lord of treasures, the lord of wealth. O God, all beings abide in you. You are my precious wealth.

I know you full well, the bearer of golden germ and sustainer of nature for you keep the world safe as in a womb, you generate all.

I have magnified with songs of praise the Purusha white as curd, ever winning, strong and fast like a steed, Dadhikravan. May he sweeten our mouth and prolong the life we have to live.

Who flays and dissects you? Who teaches you the various texts? Who comforts your organs? And who imparts you peace?

May the Spring season, etc., in due course of time, giver of peace, impart you necessary knowledge, and pacify you by means of the splendour of the year.

May the Half-months, and the Months flay and dissect your age and limbs. May day and night, and the maruts granting you felicity remove your evil thoughts in order to give you peace.

May the learned Adhvaryu impart you special teaching and thereby eradicate your faults. May they examine the joints of your limbs. May the ladies in Your connection impart you similar teaching.

May the Sky, Earth, Space, Air, Sun and Moon with the Stars of the heaven remove each of you faults and failings, and prepare a nice, successful world for you.

Well be it with your upper organs, well be it with your lower organs. Well be it with your bones and marrow and with all your body.

What's the lustre like that of the Sun? What lake is equal to the sea? What is more spacious than the Earth? What is that which is beyond measure?

Brahma is lustre like the Sun. Heaven is a flood to match the ocean. The Sun is vaster than the Earth. Beyond all measure is the cow.

O friend of the gods, I enquire for information, if you in spirit has

pervaded the universe? Is this whole universe contained in the three strides in which Vishnu is worshipped?

I pervade those three strides of Vishnu in which is contained this whole universe. The Earth and Heaven I circle in a moment with a part of my strength, even beyond Heaven am I.

What are the things which Purusha has entered into? What are the things which Purusha has contained within him? The riddle we propose to you, O Brahman. Pray tell and unravel the mystery.

Within five things has Purusha found entrance. These things has Purusha within himself established. This is the though I return in answer and yet you are not supperior to me in wisdom.

Who knows the central point of the world? Who knows the heaven and the earth and the vast mid-region between these? Who knows the creator of the mighty Sun? Who knows the Moon and whence she was engendered?

I know the centre of this world, I know heaven and earth and the vast mid-region between them. I know the creator of the mighty Surya. I know the Moon and whence she was engendered.

I ask you of the earth's most extreme limit. Where is the centre of the world, I question you? I ask you of the strength of the mighty Purusha? I ask of the loftiest heaven where Speech abides.

This altar is the earh's extremist limit. This sacrifice is the centre and navel of the world. This Soma, the king of herbs, is the strength of the mighty Purusha. This Brahman is the loftiest abode where Speech abides.

God who has engendered the Sun, the mighy and self-existent One, the first within the mighty flood. He laid down the timely embryo from which Prajapati was born. You all should worship him.

By whose might these snow-clad mountains are standing, and men call sea full of sap his possession? Whose are these stretched arms. Whose are these heavenly quarters? What god shall we adore with our oblation?

He who is the giver of vital breath, of strength and power, he

whose commandments all the gods obey, whose shade is life immortal, the lord of death. What god shall we adore with oblation?

May auspicious powers come to us from all directions, unhindered, ceasselessly and ever victorious. May thereby the gods be with us, day by day, our guardians, for our weal with their constant care.

May their auspicious favour be ours. May the bounty of the righteous gods fill us with virtues. May we seek the friendship of the gods with devotion. May they grant us longevity that we may live.

We call the gods here with hymns composed by our ancientfathers. We invoke Bhaga, the friendly Daksh, Mitra, Aditi, Aryaman, Varuna, Soma and the Ashvins twain. May auspicious Sarasvati vouchsafe us weal.

May the Wind blow to us happy medicines. May the mother Earth and our father Heaven grant us these, and also the happy stones that press out Soma juice. May both Ashvins give us bliss on hearing this our prayer.

Him we call who reigns supreme, the lord of all that stands or moves, inspires of the spirit. May Pushan, the nourisher of all, our keeper and guardian, infallible promote the growth of our wealth for good.

May the mighty Indra, so illustrious and vast, give us prosperity, may Pushan, the lord of wealth grant us prosperity. May the vast, unassailable lord god prosper us. May Brihaspati grant us prosperity.

May the Maruts, strong and fast like steeds, prevading the heavens, the generator of the clouds, moving for the weal of the people, whose tongue is Agni, their eye the Sun, come here for our protection!

O gods, may we listen with our ears and see with our eyes what is good! With limbs firm and bodies stout may we extolling you lead a life appointed by the gods.

O gods, may we live in your company for full hundred years. Let

not our bodies decay before that period, during which perioc our sons become fathers in their turn. Break you not in midst our course of fleeting life!

Aditi is heaven, Aditi is the atmosphere, Aditi is the Mother of all, the Sire and the Son. Aditi is gods, Aditi is the five tribes of men. Aditi is all that has been born and all that shall be born.

May not Varuna, Aryaman, Mitra, Ribhukshan, Indra, Ayu and Mitra ever slight or desert us. We declare amid the congregations the divine virtues of the gods, full of splendour, strong like flying steed and mighty ones.

When they lead thrice round the sacrificial steed, that is sent to gods as proper oblation, a goat precedes him, the proper oblation of Pushan, announaing the sacrifice to the gods.

Invoker, presiding Hotar-priest, atoner, Agni-kindler, Soma-expresser singer and sage, with.

O Brihaspati, grant us that which foe deserves not, which shines splendid among the people, give that, O son of rita, you effulgent with strength, that treasure splendid grant us.

O Indra, come Vritra-slayer, drink of this Soma, lord of hundred sacrifices, pressed out with stones. I accept you for the love of indra whose wealth is kine. This is your place. I accept you for him.

We pray to and Adore Vaishvanara, the immortal, the lord of light and sacrifice, truthful, effulgent, protector of beings, the lord of the world. you practise yama and niyama. I accept you for Vaishvanara as the lord of kine. This is your home. I establish you for the satisfaction of Vaishvanara.

May we ever enjoy the favour of Vaishvanara, the sovereign lord of all living things. He, the refuge of all the world, sprung from this earth he looks upon. He is engaged in the weal of the world along with the Sun.

Agni is Pavaman, Sage, Hotar-priest of all the five Races. To him of great riches we pray. You are imbued with yamas and niyamas.

May Indra, the mighty and thunder-armed protect us well and slay

the wicked who detest us. You are the lord of yamas and niyamas. I accept you for Indra's satisfaction. This is your home. I establish you for the sake of Indra.

Just as the cows low in their stall for their calves so do we sing the lauds of Indra, our lord and king, who removes affliction, the checker of assault, who enjoys riches and food. Freedom from sin may boundless Aditi grant us. May this noble Steed with our oblations gain us lordship!

With Indra and all these gods as our aid, we shall bring these worlds under our rule. May the twelve Adityas, forty-nine Maruts, Indra and all the gods grant us healing medicines. May Indra with the Adityas make our sacrifice, our bodies and our sons virtuous.

O Brihaspati, grant us that which foe deserve not, which shines splendid among the people, give that, O son of rita, you effulgent with strength that treasure splendid grant us.

O Indra, come Vritra-slayer, drink of this Soma, lord of hundred sacrifices, pressed out with stones. I accept you for the love of Indra whose wealth is kine. This is your place. I accept you for him.

We pray to and Adore Vaishvanara, the immortal, the lord of light and sacrifices, truthful, effulgent, protector of beings, the lord of the world. You practise yama and niyama. I accept you for Vaishvanara as the lord of kine. This is your home. I establish you for the satisfaction of Vaishvanara.

May we ever enjoy the favour of Vaishvanara the sovereign lord of all living things. He, the refuge of all the world, sprung from this earth he looks upon. He is engageed in the weal of the world along with the Sun.

Agni is Pavaman, Sage, Hotar-priest of all the five Races. To him of great riches we pray. You are imbued with yamas and niyamas.

May Indra, the mighty and thunder-armed protect us well and slay the wicked who detest us. you are the lord of yamas and niyamas. I accept you for Indra's satisfaction This is your home. establish you for the sake of Indra.

Just as the cows low in their stall for their calves so do we sing the lauds of Indra, our lord and king, who removes affliction, the checker of assault, who enjoys riches and food.

Honour Agni, the king, the effulgent, who carries oblation with speed. Like the chief queen of a king, riches and food stuffs proceed from him!

O Agni, the Seasons spread your sacrifice, the Months guard your offerings. May the Year strengthen your sacrifice and keep our children safe!

In the seclusion of mountain slopes and the confluence of the streams Indra manifests himself with a song.

O Soma, high is your birth, your seat is in heaven but you have obtained a home and great renown on this firm earth.

O Soma, finder of home and freedom flow for Indra whom we pray, flow for Varuna and the band of Maruts!

Struggling to win with Soma we obtain all the wealth from the unrighteous foe we win all the glories of mankind.

May we be rich in strong, heroic sons, stout kine, strong, steeds, cattle, each of our desires and blessings, in quadrupeds, in men around us. May the gods protect and guide our sacrifice in seasons.

O Agni, bring you here the longing wives of the gods to enjoy oblations and also Tvashtar to drink the Soma-draught!

O Nestar, the priest, leading the sacrificer's wife, accept our sacrifice, enjoy Soma according to the season, you are the giver of wealth!

O Priest, being the river of wealth, drink the Soma draught according to the season and so should you prepare the draught, perform sacrifices and attain respect.

O Indra, come you here unto us, this Soma is for your, approach it. Protect it ever and drink of it without stop. Sit you down on this seat of sacared greass in the sacrifice, and take you down these draughts into your stomach. O Indra!

O invoked Dames of the gods, come here and sit on the sacred grass to enjoy yourselves as at home. O god Tvashtar, enjoy yourself the joyful draught in the gladsome company of gods and goddesses.

O Soma, flow forth in most sweet and enjoyable stream. For you, O Indra, is this juice pressed out to drink!

O Soma, fiend-queller, friend of all, you have in the vat attained your iron formed home, safe and dignified!

O Agni, may years, seasons, half-years and the seers strengthen you. Shine forth with your divine effulgence and illumine all the four quarters of the heaven.

Shine you, O Agni, make this seeker after knowledge wake, rise up erect for grand and great fortune. Be them uninjured who worship you. Let your priests be glorious now beside them!

The priests present here elect you as their leader. Be you gracious to them in this election. Subdue our foes, O slayer of the rivals. Agni, be alert and watchful in your house and keep us also so with never ceasing care.

Removing them who kill, removing the foe-men, removing the thoughtless ones, remove those who detest us. Agni, sweep away all our woe and distress and grant us opulence with heroic men about us!

O Agni, invincible, effulgent, royal one, shine here unconquerable Jatavedas! Illumine all the regions, chase away all our griefs. Guard us well for prosperity!

O Brihaspati, O Savitar, give this man knowledge, sharpen his intellect more and more. Raise him to high eflicity, in him let all the gods rejoice in triumph.

O Brihaspati release us from the fruit of sins in the birth to come, free us from the fear of Yamraj in this birth. May Agni, the two Ashvins, the gods' physicians chase away the fear of death from this man.

Splendid are the fuel-stickes, lofty and brilliant are the flames of

Agni, splendid is Agni, so fair to look on.

Let Agni, the protector of bodies, all-possessing the best among the gods, sprinkle our paths with ghee and sweet sap through rain.

Extolling, the bearer of knowledge, he, the Adhvaryu comes here. While the sacrifice progresses he offers oblations to Agni with ladles full of ghee.

Let this Adhvaryu pay homage to Agni's greatness, so daintily fed. He, truly, is the giver of pleasurable things, the best wealth-giver and the wisest protector.

May Night and Dawn, his heavenly consorts, protect in our home this sacrifice of ours.

May both the divine Hotars, Agni and Vayu, greet this our lofty sacrifice, the tongue of Agni. May they conduct this sacrifice well.

May the three mighty goddesses, Ida, Sarasvati and Bharati, lauded with hymns, be seated here on this sacred grass.

May Tvashtar pour forth on us the wonderous and productive wealth full of strength, splendour and merits.

The god whom both the Heaven and Earth have brought forth for the acquisition of wealth, whom celestial goddess has appointed for our wealth, his yoked horses wait on Vayu, the splendid lord of riches.

When the mighty waters containing the universal germ came into being, generating the Sun, there was one Spirit present in all the forces of nature. What god shall we adore with our oblation?

God with hight then surveyed the floods containing productive force and generative germ. He among the gods is one supreme God and none beside him. What god shall we adore with our oblation?

O Vayu, riding which teams of horses you seek him who offers sacrifice within his house, riding that come to our sacrifice to grant us pleasurable wealth, heroic son, and gifts of kine and horses.

Riding your harnessed teams in hundreds, in thousands come to our sacrifice and solemn rite, O Vayu, to gladden yourself with our

oblation. O gods preserve us evermore with proptious blessings!

Come here car-borne, O Vayu, come to us for receiving sweet Soma juice offered in the sacrifice, visit you the house where Soma has been pressed out.

Come you, O Vayu, riding your thousand cars, come to us chariot-borne, to enjoy the Soma-draught.

Come you by one or two, three or ten, twenty or thirty chariots to our sacrifice. Come unto us and unjoke your team of horses here.

O Vavy, lord of truth, Tvashtar's son-in-law, your means of protection we elect, O god wonderous!

Like unmilked kine, we sing your praise aloud, O Hero, the lord of animate and inanimate beings, and so beautful to look on.

O Maghavan, none other like you in heaven or on earth has been, nor shall ever be. Desiring horses, kine and power we call you offering libations, O Indra, lord of splendour.

O Indra, we, the poets and sacrificers call you alone. In war men call on you the lord of heroes, in the race of the steeds we call on you.

O wonderous lord Indra, thunder-armed, lauded as mighty, wielder of thunderbolt, grant us kine, chariot horses, ever to be the conqueror.

O ever prosperous and wonderful friend, with what potent protection and with what mighty company will you come unto us?

O Indra, you are the guard of your friends who laud you, come unto us, your devotees with your hundred means of protection.

Sing at every sacrifice the glory of Agni, for obtaining strength. Come, let us praise with our hymns the wise and immortal Agni, him, the well beloved friend.

O Agni, lord of might, giver of the best home, protect us through the first hymn, protect us through the second one, protect us through the third hymn. Guard us through three hymns, protect us through your hymns, O god.

O Adhvaryu, let us adore agni, the son of strength, our friend, with gifts of oblations. He is our well-wisher and aids us in battles, he is the aviour of our bodies.

O Agni, you are Samvatsara, you are Parivatsara, you are Idvatsara, Idatasa you are and Vatsara. Dawns may prosper you! May Day and Night prosper you. May Half-months, Months, Seasons and the Years prosper you! You arrange their coming and going hence and send them forth on their ordered courses. You collect all the sources of protection. With that divinity lie steady like Angiras.

On the earth's centre, at the place of sacrifice, the Hotar worships Indra with kindled fuel-sticks. Agni, the mighty lord is kindled on the height of heaven.. May enjoy ablation of ghee in Hotar's worship.

Him the Hotar worships, him the self-born, the mighty lord, the guardian of our beings, Indra, ever invincible, the conqueror, knower of himself and the heaven, virtuous, full of delight. Let him enjoy oblation of ghee.

Let the hotar worship Indra, the thunder-wielder, render of the enemy forts, mighty, immortal, lauded, and invoked by the gods. Let him enjoy the oblation of ghee.

Let Hotar worship him, Indra, the Bull among gods who sits on the sacred grass, doer of many deeds. May he sit down on the sacred grass with the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and twelve Adityas as his friends. Let him enjoy the oblation of ghee.

The Hotar performed yajna to Night and Morning, the two milch-cows of Indra, the mighty Mothers. they have strengthened their calf Indra with nourishment of lustre like two mother-cows of a common calf. Let him enjoy oblation of ghee.

The learned priest performed yajna to Ashvins. the divine Physicians, friends of Indra, wise, the sages, far famed among the gods who healed Indra with oblation and gave him mighty strength.

The learned priest performed sacrifice to the three goddesses Ida, Sarasvati and Bharti with oblation of ghee. May these three, the divine consorts of Indra enjoy oblations of ghee in this sacrifice.

The learned priest offered sacrifice to Tvashtar, full of opulence, remover of diseases, good performer of yajna, of many forms, handsome, mighty and lord of wealth. May Tvashtar who gave Indra wonderful strength, enjoy this offered sacrifice of ghee.

The learned priest sacrificed to the Lord of Forests, the bringer of peace, doer of many deeds, the wise and friend of Indra. May he enjoying oblation of ghee, sweeten our sacrifice with savoury butter and balm our paths in order to make them easy and smooth.

Morning and Night, the goddesses called upon Indra as the sacrifice began, May they, well beloved, our well-wishers, make the divine subjects come here. May they enjoy oblation of ghee for enriching the Sacrificer in wealth and position.

Both the goddesses who give wealth and are gracious, have increased radiant Indra's strength. One removes sin and distress, the other gives acceptable riches and wealth to the sacrificer. May they enjoy oblation for the gain of wealth and position to the Sacrificer.

Both the goddesses, giver of food and sap, the milch-cows have nourished Indra with their milk. One gives food and energy, the other feast and sap. They bring strength-giving sacrifice and give many portions, blending old energy with the new and new with the old. They are the givers of cherished wealth. May they enjoy oblation for increasing the wealth and status of the Sacrificer.

Both the divine Hotars, increased radiant Indra's might. They have brought wealth and gifts freed from the sinful thieves for the Sacrifices. May they enjoy sacrifice for increasing the wealth and status of the Sacrifcer.

The goddesses three have increased lord Indra's strength. Bharati has touched the heaven, Sarasvati, the companion of the Rudras, has enriched the sacrifice with wealth, and Ida has touched the earth.

The god Vanaspati with golden leaves, with honeyed bows and with fine fruits has increased lord Indra's might. He has touched the sky with his top, with mid-portion the firmament and with root

has established the earth. May he enjoy this şacrifice for increase of the Sacrificer's wealth and his firm establishment.

Bright Agni, the fulfiller of the best wishes has increased radiant Indra's might. May he, also called Svishtakrit today, making fine offerings, perform the sacrifice for us. May he enjoy the sacrifice for Sacrificer's gain of wealth and promotion of his status.

The priest sacrificed to Agni, and Indra well-kindled, venerable, giver of excellent strength, increasing his might, lending him the Gayatri verse, a cow of one and half years and vigour. May the Sacrificer with Indra enjoy ghee. So should you also perform the sacrifice.

The priest sacrificed to him who rends forts, the germ that Aditi conceived in her womb, Indra, the pure who gives life and strength, lending him great strength, the Ushnish verse, a two- year old ox and strength. May he enjoy butter. So should you also perform sacrifice with oblation of ghee.

The priest sacrificed to Soma and Indra, laudable, praised, Vritra-slayer, strength-giver, lending him strength, Anushtup verse, a cow of thirty months and vigour.

The priest performed sacrifice to Indra, deathless, who sits on the sacred grass, nourisher, strength-giver, immortal, dear, beautiful, lending him strength, Brihati verse and a cow of thee years.

The priest sacrificed to the goddesses Night and Morning, beautiful to look on, adorned well, of varied hue, to Indra, life-bestowing, lending him strength, the Trishtup verse and a bullock four years old able to carry burden.

Divine Agni, who makes fair rites, has lended strength to Indra, the giver of strength. The god has strengthened the god giving him Atichhandas verse, might and sway. May he enjoy oblation of shee for the sake of the Sacrificer's wealth.

O Agni, all-knowing, well-kindled, enjoying tasty and sweet butter, fast moving, decking the minds of the learned, O Jatvedas, convey to the gods, what is dear to them.

Sprinkling the paths with ghee that lead to the gods, may the

Courser go to the gods knowing their oblation. O Steed, may the quarters of heaven attend you! Bestow food on this sacrificer!

O Steed, you are worthy of adoration and obeisance. You are swift and sacred for the sacrifice. May Vasus and Agni in accord with gods, take you, the contended bearer, to the abode of gods.

May Aditi, the boudless, vast, far-famed, seated on the wide-spread sacred grass, imbued with divine powers, bliss-giving, accordant, grant strength and happiness.

O priests, may these Doors of the hall of sacrifice, divine, full of splendour, auspicious, of varied forms, lofty and wide, unfolding, well fitted and sonorous, richly decorated, offer us easy entrance and exit.

The two goddesses Dawn and Night, established between Varuna and Mitra, rich in varied hue and wealth, intimate with the force of Sacrificer, I establish here in this sacrifice, the home of Truth.

I have pleased both these divine Hotars, chariot-borne, fair-complexioned, who behold all the world. They, the ordainers of sacrificial rules, inspirer of noble-acts, have spread the light in every direction.

May goddess Bharati with the Adityas promote our sacrifice, Sarasvati with the Rudras be our aid, and Ida protect our yajna. O divine goddesses, establish our rite among the gods.

Mat the Sun, balmed with ghee, go himself, seeking his abode among the gods in seasons. May Vanaspati, the lord of herbs, convey our savoury oblation to gods, tasted by Agni.

O Agni, increased with Prajapati's brilliant fervour and born immediately from the friction of fuel-sticks, you protect our yajna. Precede you unto the gods and Sadhyas bearing consecrated offering so that they may enjoy our oblation.

O fleet Steed, when you sprang to life neighing from the ocean or from the vaporous atmosphere, you had limbs of the deer and wings of the eagle. O Courser, you deserve applause for your high birth.

The Steed with first harnessed by Trita and given by Yama and Indra was the first to mount. Gandharva held his briddle. The Sun fashioned forth the Courser.

O Courser, you are Yama, Aditya are you, Trita are you by three secret operations. You are specially united with Soma, and it is said that there are three bonds in heaven that hold you.

O Steed, it is said that Surya is your loftiest generator. Three bonds are said to be there in heaven to bind you, three in the waters and three in the atmosphere, O Courser of the loftiest birth.

O Courser, here I see the places where they groomed you, I behold here the prints of your winning hooves. Here are the auspicious reins that guide you. They guard you who protect this sacred rite.

O Steed, I recognised your soul from distance, a Bird soaring up from below. I saw your head soaring, striving upward by paths untouched by dust and pleasant to travel.

I behold here your beautiful, matchless form, eager to win the foe and the food produced from the earth. Whenever one brings you fodder, you swallow the herbs. O you most voracious eater!

O Steed, the car follows you, the bridegroom follows you and the fortune of maidens comes after you. The people in groups follow you seeking your friendship, the gods dwell upon your pattern of strength.

Lustrous and golden are his horns, his feet are of iron. Even thought swift Indra is less fleet than he. Gods come only to Indra's sacrifice who first of all rode the Steed.

Thin bellied, symmetrical, with rounded haunches, mighty of strength, the divine Steeds of Surya's chariot pur forth their mettie like flying swans when they obtained the heavenly pathways.

O Courser, your body is formed for flight, your spirit is swift like the wind, your horns are spread wide on all sides, they move restlessly like wild fire.

The fleet and dexterous Steed has come forth for sacrifice, with a contemplative mind. He follows a goat, his kin, and the sages and

the poets follow after.

He is come to the noblest abode, is come to his Parents. Today he shall reach the gods, most welcome. He bestows best gifts on liberal givers and sacrificers.

Agni, who preceded gods, prepared the sacrifice as soon as he was born. May the gods enjoy our oblations made sacred according to the law and guidance of the priest.

O men, giving light where no light was, and form where no form was, Agni was born together with the Dawns.

When a warrior goes to battle with his mail on, he looks like a thunderous rain-cloud O hero, be you victorious with unharmed body. May the protection of your armour guard you.

The bow-string, close to the bow's ear, fain to speak whispers like a woman holding her beloved in her close embrace, this bow-string that preserves us in the battle.

The bow and its string meeting together like a woman and her husband bear like parents upon their bosom the arrow, their son. May the two bow-ends in accord scatter asunder swiftly the foe-men we hate.

Our fathers who gave us birth lived in harmony, patient and powerful in distress, untired, armed with wonderful army and sharp shafts, free, invincible and conquerors of the enemy hosts.

O Agni, this day enkindled in the house of man, invoke gods. O Jatavedas, best observant, virtuous, envoy of gods, high spirited and wise, bring the gods here in sacrifice!

Called upon, praiseworthy, deserving worship, you are the invoker of gods, best sacrificer, perform this sacrifice to the gods, O Agni.

Let the vast Doors of the hall be widely opened, like virtuous wives who decorate themselves with ornaments for their noble hushands. O high, divine, all-inspiring Doors, admit all the gods and provide them easy approach.

Let the Dawn and Night, respectively of bright and pale hue, close to each other, be seated on their seats, the divine dames, high-born,

decked in gold, sacrifice-worthy, great, fair and of lustrous beauty.

May both the divine Hotars, sweet-voiced, inducer of men in deeds of sacrifice come to our site, the singers, knower of the Vedas, the revealer of the light in the east with their direction.

May Bharti, Ida and Sarasvati come unto us speedily from all sides. May all these three goddesses executors of fine deeds be seated on the sacred grass.

O learned and wise priest, bring here quickly, now god Tvashtar who knows that God who created heaven and earth, the generator of various forms.

May the learned Brahmans and the Fathers worthy for Some draughts, auspicious ones, matchless both in heaven and earth, protect us against evil. May Pushan, strengthener of order, protect us. May the wicked never be our master.

Guard well in the battle where arrow and weapons are swift, let our bodies be strong like stone. May Soma kindly instruct us, and Aditi guard as well.

O lord of the wood, O Vanaspati, be strong, be a victorious hero bearing us. Show forth your mettle, yoked with brave and let your leader win all the booty of the battle.

Grant us the strength of the Sun and the Earth, the vitality of the forest trees, the force of the saps and waters. Fill your chariot with mighty weapons shining like the rays of the Sun.

O you Thunderbolt, Vanguard of the Marut hosts, yoked to Varuna and son of Mitra, accept these our gifts we offer, receive like god our oblations.

O you thundering Drum, send forth your roar through heaven and earth, throughout the world along its breadth, and frive away a foe, yea, very far, our enemies, accordant with gods and Indra.

O War-drum, thunder out strength and fill us full of vigour, drive away all andgers and misfortunes. O you, Fist of Indra, render us firm and steadfast, and make them weep who war against us.

O war-drum, drive hence away the enemy troops and bring here

back our troops safe and victorious. The thundering war-drum signals the waging of the war. O Indra, let our warriors riding steeds and chariots return together in triumphs.

Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. Pervading the earth on every side he transgress the universe.

Purusha in truth is all this, what has been and what yet shall be. He is the lord of all that which grows still greater by food.

The visible and the invisible worlds reveal his mighty grandeur, yet he is greater than all this. All the worlds are but one- fourth of him, three-fourths eternal lies within him.

With three-fourths of his grandeur Purusha sprang up. With one-fourth of it he created the universe, and then he moved forth to every side pervading all that is animate and inanimate.

He createed Virat from himself and then Purusha from Virat. When born he spread out to west and east transgressing the boudaries of the earth.

From that great venerable Purusha were generated curd and ghee. He fashioned forth the animals and birds both wild and tame.

From that Purusha, unto whom people make sacrifice, were born the Richas and Saman hymns. Therefrom then spraing up the spells and formulas of Atharvaveda and the Yajus.

From Purusha were born horses, and from him were born all cattle with two rows of teeth. From him were born kine, from him were produced goats and sheep.

They embalmed the Virat Purusha as victim on the grass, him all the gods, Sandhyas, and Rishis sacrificed.

When they sacrificed Purusha how many portions did they make? What was his mouth? What were his arms? What were the thighs and feet?

His mouth was the Brahman, both of his arms was the Prince created. His thighs produced the Vaishyas, from his feet the Shudra was born.

From his mind come thee Moon, and from his eyes came the Sun, from his ears were born Vayu and Prana, and from his mouth was Agni born.

Mid-air was born from his navel, the sky was fashioned froth from his head, the earth from his feet, and the quarters from his ears. Thus the world was formed.

When the gods scrificed Purusha as offering in the yajna, Spring was the ghee, Autumn the oblation, and Summer was the fuel.

The seven were the covering sticks and three timess seven were the kindling ones, when gods performing sacrifice, bound Purusha as their sacrificial victim.

These were the earliest holy ordinances when gods sacrificed Purusha as their offering. The Mighty ones attained the highest heaven, these were the Sadhyas and gods of old dwell.

In the beginning God created the world nourished by waters, earth and sun. Fixing the form thereof the Sun proceeds on his daily course. This was the beginning of the mortals.

I know this mighty Purusha, golden as the sun, beyond the reach of darkness. By knowing him a man even now becomes immortal leaving death behind. This is the path to attain him, there is none other.

Prajapati, the all-creator pervades the being in the womb and the beings that are born. Being himself unborn, he reveals himself in various ways. The sages alone know his true nature. In him alone exist all creatures.

The Sun who imparts light and heat to gods, stands first and foremost among the gods, was born before the gods. Homage be to him, the resplendent the holy One.

The gods in the beginning, when they generated the bright and holy Sun said thus: The Brahman who thus knew you shall have the gods in his control.

Grandeour and Fortune are your two wives, each side of you are day and night. The constellations are your form, the Ashvins are

your open mouth. Wishing salvation, grant me yonder world so that the whole universe be mine with absorption into Brahman, the All.

Agni is That, the Sun is That, Vayu is That, the Moon is That, Shukra verily is that. Brahma is That, Apa is That, Prajapati is That.

All divisions of time including the twinklings of the eyelids sprang from the resplendent Purusha. No one has comprehended him from above, across or in the midst.

There is no second of him whose glory verily is great. In the beginning was generated Hiranyagarbha. May he not harm me. He the unborn deserves our worship.

This Purusha pervades all the regions; yea, born afore time, in the womb he dwells. He is born now, and shall be born hereafter to meet his offspring, facing all directions.

Before whom naught whatever sprang to being, who with his presence aids all beings. He, the Prajapati, rejoicing in his offspring, maintains the three great lustres. He verily is Shodashi.

By him stand the heavens strong and the earth stands firmly. He props the realm of light and the vault of sky. He is the measure of all the regions. We worship that blissful God with our oblation.

Whom, the Sun and the Earth, propeed by his help, moving in their orbits, do look with a yearning, in whom the Sun shines in full. We worship that blissful God with our oblation.

The sage behold that mysterious Being in the inmost recesses of the heart, in whom all the worlds have found one only abode. In Him is united the whole universe and thence it comes forth. Ubiquitous That pervades all creatures like the wrap and woof.

The Gandharva, knowing the eternal, may describe Him, the abode of release, hidden in the heart. His three steps are hidden in mystery. He who knows them becomes the fathers's father.

He is our Brother, our Father and Begetter. He knows all beings and all worlds. In him the gods obtaining life immortal have risen up to the third high heaven.

God reveals himself pervading all the existing creatures, the worlds, all the Qarters and Mid-quarters. The sages having understood the holy order enter into God, the embodiment of truth.

Having pervaded the earth, the heaven, the worlds, the sky and quarters, and having lengthened the thread of law, he views, and he becomes, and is That Being.

To the wonderous God, the splendidfriend of the soul who bestows wisdom, I have come closer in worship.

That wisdom which the gods and sages long. for, even with that wisdom, O Agni, make me wise today, Svaha!

May Varuna grant me wisdom, may Agni and Prajapati grant it! May Indra and Vayu grant it! May the Creator bestow it on me. Svaha!

May these Brahmans and Kshatriyas enjoy the splendour and wealth of mine. May the gods grant me the best wealth and splendour. To you all that splendour. Svaha!

That which, divine, goes far, when man is waking, that which returns to him when he is sleeping, That light is one light that goes to a distance, may that, my mind, be moved by right resolve.

Whereby the virtuous and wise in assemblies, and in sacrifices perform their duties, the unique spirit abiding in living beings, may that, my mind, be moved by right resolve.

That which is wisdom, intellect and firmness, eternal light, which beings have within, that without which man can do no action, may that, my mind, be moved by right resolve.

Whereby all is comprehended, the past, present, future and immortal gods, whereby spreads the sacrifice by seven Hotars, may that, my mind, be moved by right resolve.

Wherein the Riches, Samans, Yajur-verses, like spokes within a cart's nave, are included, and all the thoughts of human beings are inwoven, may that, my mind, be moved with right resolve.

As a skilled charioteer controls and drives with reins the fleet horses, so does the mind control and guide men. It dwells within

the heart, is agile, most quick, may that my mind, be moved by right intention.

Five rivers flowing forth speed onward to Sarasvati and then merge into Sarasvati, a fivefold river in the land.

O Agni, you are the earliest friend of gods, the seer, effulgent, a god. After your holy law, the Maruts, sages, wise and active with their splendid weapons, were born.

O Agni, worthy of reverence, preserve our wealthy patrons and ourselves. O god, with your succours. O god, guard are you of our seed, offspring and kine, incessantly protecting in your holy law.

O learned priests, bring great offerings to Indra, the great one, and chant the Saman hymn for strength, by whom our fathers, singing lauds obtained the laud and kine.

O Indra, you are the source of all wisdom. The men who press out and offer you Soma and other oblations, your friends, bear unmoved, the cursing of others.

Not even distant places are far for you, O Indra. Come here, lord of steeds, riding your Bay Courses. Pressed out are these juices for the strong and steadfast. The press-stones are set, the fire is ready.

To him who adores Soma, he gives a milch-cow, a fleet steed, a brave son, active in duties, skilled in council, dignified in the court, the splendid reflection of his fathers.

These herbs, these milch-kine, these flowing streams, all these, O Soma you have produced. You have expanded the spacious firmament and with the light has removed the darkness.

O god Soma, with your godly spirit, win for us a share of riches. You are the lord of valour, let none prevent you. Remove our impediments both here and in the next world.

God Savitar, the radiant one, comes bestowing choice treasures on his devotees. He has illumined the earth's eight directions, the three regions and the seven rivers.

Savitar, the golden handed, fast moving travels between the heaven and the earth, driving away diseases, and by setting he fills the

atmosphere with dark night.

O Ashvins twain, grant us well protected homes, both of you, where you may enjoy our libations.

O Ashvins, make our wisdom and speech effectual, and this our hymn, O mighty ones. In lucky game I invoke you for help, strengthen also, both of you, in the sacrifice.

Guard us well on all sides by day and by night with your undiminished care, O Ashvins. May Varuna grant us this our prayer, and Mitra, Aditi, Sindhu, Earth and Heaven.

The great Night has pervaded the earth, the atmosphere and the mid-region. She has spread out on high through the seats of heaven. Her terrific darkness has come.

O Dawn, enriched with ample weath, grant us that wonderful boon wherewith we may support our sons and sons' sons.

We call on Bhaga, the mighty, triumphant son of boundless Aditi, the sustainer of the world. Thinking of whom the poor, impatieent, even the king says, let me share his bounty.

O Bhaga, be our guide, give us wealth, favour our prayer and grant us forthful gits. Make us rich in horses and kine, O Bhaga. May our store be full in men and cattle.

May the Dawns favour this our worship and come to our holy sacrifice. As mighty steeds draw a chariot may they bring here Bhaga, the giver of riches.

As the fine dames of heroic sons, possessed of steeds, milk the kine, so may the Dawns, streaming with plenty, preserve us ever more with their wealth and blessings.

O Pushan, living ever under your guardianship, may we never be ruined. Here we sing your praise.

I praise aloud god Pushan who protects all the pathways. He went to Surya, impelled by his love for him. May he establish our wisdom and make our prays fruitful.

Vishnu, the merciful, protector and pervader of all, took three

strides and thenceforth established his sacred laws.

By Varuna's decree the Heaven and Earth, stand apart from each other, full of sap, encompassing all created things, vest, spacious, full of sweetness and beautiful in form.

May our enemies stand apart from us. With Indra and with Agni we will drive them afar. The Vasus, Rudras, Adityas have exalted me, made me pre-eminent, mighty, thinker and over-lord.

Came, O Nastyas, come, O Ashvins, with the thrice eleven gods to enjoy the sweet Some-juice. Lengthen out our days of life wiping out all our sins, be with us ever more and drive away our foemen.

This gold ornament which the learned bind on the kings of hundred fold army, with benevolent thought, I bind on me for long life of hundred years so that I may live till ripe old age overtakes me.

Seven Rishis are established in the body, these seven protect it with unceasing care. These seven enter into the soul of him who lies asleep. Then two sleepless gods Prana and Apana, the guards of the soul, keep vigil.

Arise, O Brahmanaspati, we yearning for you paray to you. May those who give good gifts, the Maruts, approach us. O Indra, be you quick with them.

Now Brahmanaspati does speak aloud the solemn hymn of praise, wherein Indra and Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and gods have made their abode.

O Brahamanaspati, protector of the world, know our prayer and prosper our offspring. He whom the gods favour is ever blessed. May we, possessed of heroic sons, speak aloud in the assembly. God who is our guardian, may protect us well. O lord of the food, grant us a good share of food!

Avaunt, hence away, you Pisachas, inimical to gods, rebellious! This is the place for those who effuse the Soma-juice.

May Savitar grant a happy spot on this earth for your mortal remains. May radiant Sun prove helpful in this!

Let Vayu purify you, let Savitar purify you with fire's glitter and

sun's lustre. Let the rays release you!

God established you in this ephemeral world and made your abode here ever changing like a leaf, therefore, worship the supreme God alone and serve the cows!

May Savitar lay down your remains on the lap of mother Earth. O Earth be gracious to this mortal man.

Here I lay you down, O man, in Prajapati, near this lovely place full of water. May his light drive away sin from us.

Go hence, O Death, follow your special pathway apart from that which gods are wont to walk. To you who hears and sees, I say it. Touch not our children, harm not our heroes!

Pleasant be to you the wind and sun, and pleasant be to you the bricks. Pleasant be to·you the terrestrial fires, let them not put you to grief.

May the regions, the waters and the seas be most propitious. Auspicious to you be the atmosphere. May all Quarters prosper well for you!

On flows the stony river hold each other fast to cross it, keep yourselves up and reach the other bank. Let us here abandon that which is useless for us. May we attain the excellent foods.

O god, drive away sin, drive away evil, impurity and sorcery. O Apamarga, drive the evil dreams away from us.

May the Waters and the medicinal herbs be friendly to us and unfriendly to him who hates us and whom we hate!

We touch for our weal the ox, the son of Surabhi. May he be bearer of gods and our deliverer as Indra is to gods.

May we ever looking upon the loftiest light, above the darkness, effulgent, divine, the most excellent light, the Sun attain the gods.

Here I raise this wall for the living. Let none of these, none other cross this limit. May you following this law for a hundred lengthened autumns and may you keep Death beneath this mountain.

O Agni, you purify our life. Give us abundant strength and food and drive away distress and misfortune!

O Agni, balmed in ghee, with butter on your face, live long, strengthened with sacrifice.

All these men have led about the cow, have led Agni round. They have offered oblation to high gods. Then who will attack them with success?

I drive away the flesh-devouring Agni, sinful let them go to Yama's abode. Here, may this other Jatavedas, foreknowing, carry our oblation to the gods.

O Jatavedas, carry the portion of sacrifice to the Fathers, where, far away, you know them established. May streams of sap flow there for them. May their desires, so truthful, be fulfilled. Savaha!

O Earth, be you without thorn and pleasant as our resting place. Grant us spacious room full of comfort and happiness. May your fire burn down all our sins.

O Agni, you have been kindled by this man, let him be again born from you. For Heaven this man I name! All-hail!

This whole world, all that lives and moves on earth, is enveloped by God. Seek joy in renouncing the transient. Do not covet another man's wealth.

Only one performing actions with detachment, should desire to live a hundred years. This is the only way for you so that your actions do not cling to you.

There are infernal worlds, ever enveloped in the deepest gloom. There go those when life here is done, who slay the self.

Motionless, the One is swifter than the mind. The gods fail to overtake That speeding forth before them. Standing still, he outstrips those who are running. Abiding in him life-force acts through everything.

He moves and yet he moves not; he is far and yet near. He is within all this and yet is without.

The man who beholds all beings that are in the Self and the Self in all beings, is never a prey of doubt.

When a man who knows well, all beings become one with the Self, when he further sees that one alone in everything, then how can distress or delusion touch him?

God is radiant, all-pervading, incorporeal, sans-scar or sinew, invulnerable, pure, unpierceby evil. He is sage, seer, omnipresent, self-existent, and has assigned to everything it's due prosperity unto the everlasting time.

Into the depths of blinding darkness fall those who worship ignorance, and into still deeper darkness sink they who enjoy pleasures carnal.

One fruit, they declare, results from the knowledge, another from ignorance. This we have heard from the sages who have revealed it to us.

The man who knows simultaneously both knowledge and ignorance, overcoming death through knowledge attains life immortal.

Into blinding darknes fall those who follow Nescience or Avidya, into blinder still those who pride themselves of their knowledge.

Different are the results, they say, of Nescience and knowledge. Thus we have heard from the sages who have revealed it to us.

He who knows well both knowledge and Nescience simultaneously, overcoming death by knowledge attains life immortal.

Soul is a—material and immortal, but this body will be reduced to ashes. O man, doer of actions, meditate and Universal Soul, the protector of all, remember your deeds, remember your deeds!

O God, lead us along the righteous path to riches and prosperity; O god you know all our deeds. Remove from us our sin that leads us astray. To you then, we shall bring most ample and reverent adoration.

The face of Truth is hidden over by a golden vessel. The spirit

yonder in the Sun, the spirit dwelling there, I myself am he! Om!

Yam

Yam is the god od death and is the lord of the infernal regions visited by man after cessation of life. He is the embodiment of the rule of law and imparts justice according to deeds. The word 'Yam' means the restrainer, it is he who keeps the mankind in check.

Yam's mount is a fierce-looking black buffalo, a form which he also adopts for himself on occasions. He has got a rope noose in one hand, by which he is supposed to catch hold of his victims and a mace in the other which represents the weapon of punishment.

He decides what are the actions of the living beings that bear or do not bear fruits, when his messengers drag the dead before his throne. In Vedas Yam is the First Ancestor and has the full distinction of a god. He is shown as having a fearful and grim appearance and he wears a glittering crown upon his head.

Yam is the son of Vivasat, the embodiment of social morality, while his mother is Saranyu (clouds), who is the daughter of Vishwakarma, the cosmic architect. Yam's twin sister is Yami, who has the greatest affection for her brother. Yami later appeared on this earth as the river Yamuna.

As being the judge of the dead, he is said to hold a court, in which he is the presiding officer. He has another small god to assist him, who is called Chitragupta. Chitragupta is supposed to keep an account of the actions of men. If the actions of the deceased in his life time have been wicked, he is sent to suffer in a particular part of hell, while a man with noble deeds is sent to a part of heaven.

Yam is regent of the south quarter and as such is called Dakshinasapati. His abode is named as Yamalya on the south side of the earth and has an interesting leged around it. This account is taken from the Mahabharat. The narration is that after Brahma had created the three worlds, viz., earth, heaven and *Patal* (the subterranean region), he recollected that a place for judgement and punishment of the wicked was wanting. He therefore, asked the architect Vishwakarma to prepare a suitable place for this purpose.

Vishwakarma prepared a magnificent palace and opposite its south door he created four pits to punish the wicked. Three other doors were reserved for the entrance of the good so that they might not see the place of punishment when they went to be judged. Brahma named this palace Sanjeevani. Brahma ordered the architect to form a vast trench around it and fill it with water, which came to be called Vaitarnee. Brahma next ordered Agni (the fire god) to enter this river so that the water might boil. After the death each person is obliged to swim across this Vaitarnee river, which gives harmless passage to good souls but the evil ones have to suffer torments and pangs while crossing this river's boiling water.

This legendary place of heaven created for Yam by Vishwakarma is 800 miles in circumference. At this place there is no fear of enemies and sorrow of mind and body is non-existent. The climate is mild and salubrious and each one is rewarded in kind according to his deeds. He who has given much in charity receives very many comforts of all kinds.

To the virtuous and to the sinner Yam appears in different forms. To the virtuous he appears to be "like Vishnu. He has four arms, a dark complexion and lotus-like eyes. His face is charming and he wears a resplendent smile." In the case of the wicked, he is seen with "limbs appearing three hundred leagues long. His eyes are deep wells. His lips are thin, the colour of smoke, fierce. He roars like the ocean of destruction. His hairs are gigantic reeds, his crown a burning flame. The breath from his wide nostrils blows off the forest fires. He has long teeth. His nails are like winnowing baskets. Stick in hand, clad in skins, he has a frowning brow."

Yam has three wives, called Hema Mala (Golden-Garland), Shushila (Good natured one), and Vijya (Victory). Yam has two ferocious dogs, who were born to Sarama (The Fleet-one), which is the bitch that guards the herds of Indra. These two dogs have four eyes each and very wide nostrils. They guard the road to Yam's abode and which the departed are advised to hurry past with all possible speed. These dogs are said to wander about among men as his messengers.

Numerous stories about Yam are scattered in religious books and

specially Purans abound in them. One that shows Yam in a different light and is known to every Hindu is inserted here just to show that Yam is not without compassion. This is the story of Savitri Satyavan. This story from Mahabharat has stirred popular imagination since centuries. It relates to a noble princes who remains faithful to her husband unto death and even byond it.

The name of this beautiful princess was Savitri. Once she met in the woods a beautiful young man, named Satyavan, son of an exiled and blind king who had been living in a hut like a hermit. She fell in love with this exiled prince and wanted to marry him. The astrologers of her father's court warned that Satyavan was destined to die within one year. But the princess was adamant and married him.

On the fixed day Yam, the god of death, himself came on the buffalo and took the soul of Satyavan. Savitri, his wife, did not beg for his soul. She was very learned and just recited the beautiful and relevant passages concerning this god from the holy scriptures. Yam was pleased and asked Savitri to have any boon except her husband's life. Savitri requested god Yam to give back eyesight to Satyavan's father. She still continued her prayers and god agreed to grant another favour. Savitri asked Yam to give back to her father-in-law the kingdom he had lost. This favour was also granted. Yam went away holding Satyavan's soul, Savitri too followed him. Yam agreed to grant her the third favour Savitri replied, 'I wish to give birth to hundred sons'. Yam went away holding Satyavan's soul, Savitri too followed him. Yam, in a hurry, promised this boon without giving a second thought to its implications. Savitri immediately said, "But how can I give birth to them without my husband?" Yam was caught unawares and he could no go back of his promise. He had to grant this boon also to her.

Many other such legends are related concerning this god though the wide-spread image of this deity is that of a fearful rod- bearer bent on punishing for deeds or misdeeds committed during life.

Yoga : The Science of Soul

Yoga marks the culmination of the spiritual growth through rites, rites, rituals, observances, puja, upasana, contemplation and dhyana. It is the final stage when man realizes 'Tat tvamasi or Aham Brahman'. It is characterized by the end of attachment to things and sense-desires, leading to the identification of the knower with the Self or Atman. Rites and religious practices are a means of obtaining temporary gains and favours from gods, which man feels he cannot acquire otherwise, but yogic state is the state of complete fulfilment, bliss, peace, absolute knowledge and emancipation. Yoga represents the highest grade and class in spiritual learning and attainment. It is the final phase of religious and spiritual evolution. External practices are like formalities observed because one is still not intimate and united with the Reality. There are all kinds of rites and rituals when one wantes gods to advance one's interests, not so high and sublime, but merely mundane and comparatively cheap.

The early Aryans exerted their best to propitiate various gods and goddesses through sacrifice and laudatory hymns and such other practices in order to gain their grace and avoid misfortunes and adversities. They wanted to lead a life full of longevity, health, pleasures, riches and laughter. They wished it to continue hereafter in the heaven in the company of Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Soma and other gods. That is why Vedic religion was more pantheistic and polytheistic and less monistic. Those were the formative days and the concept of yoga leading to final liberation and release through jnana was then perhaps not known. It was in the Upanishadic times that the ideal of heavenly joys and pleasures was replaced by moksha and final release. Upanishadic seers aimed not at life of joys here and a post- mortem existence of bliss in the paradise, but sought after desireless jivanmukti here and perfect identification with Brahman and cessation of the cycle of birth and death hereafter.

The urge to realise the Reality is there alike in the observances and Yoga, but later quickens the process of spiritual evolution by expanding the aspirant's consciousness. It is a direct method which

does away with intermediaries and such other things which obscure the vision of God. Yoga is subtle, and therefore, for them who are introvert and jnani. Karmakanda and rituals form the path trodden by extroverts for the sake of material gains, sense- satisfaction and removal of adversities. Rituals are useful at lower levels for gaining favours and grace from God, for is bestows what he prayed for. A great part of the Vedas is in the form of prayers, rituals and fire sacrifices meant for different occasions for obtaining specific fruits and desires, But in the Upanishads Karmakanda has been replaced by knowledgge as a sure means of God-realization and moksha. It is in this sense that the Vedas represent the childhood of Hinduism and Upanishads the maturity and adulthood. Upanishads have the eye of archer Arjuna, and make their way directly to the goal without looking right or left. There is no distraction, no deviation and identification is perfect.

"This they consider as Yoga

The firm holding back of the senses.

Then one becomes undistracted.

Yoga, truly, is the origin and the end."

-Kathopanishad, VI, II.

Distraction, lack of discipline and self-control, greed, glutony, anger, lust, levity, discontent, etc., are ayoga or mental distraction. Yoga is the sure panecea for all these and many more ill. Yoga generates in the heart of a yogi the virtues of renunciation, desirelessness, non-attachment, concentration, equanimity, harmlessness, purity, peace and love for all. These virtues are certainly far superior than the material gains and favours obtained from gods through sacrifice, rituals, rites and observances. The faculties of mind are weakened by attachment to things and desires while non-attachment, desirelessness, freedom from the bondage of sense-objects and constant communion with Universal Soul strengthen and help in the unfoldment of latent potentialities.

The origin of yoga can be traced back to Proto-Shiva of Indus Valley Civilization. There were excaved many terracotta statuettes of the three-faced god sitting in a yoga-posture and absorbed in meditation or samadhi. He has his sight fixed on the tip of his nose. He is attended by a bull and surrounded by many other animals. This same god has been identified with Shiva of classical Hinduism. Thus, the cult of penances, austerities, concentration and yoga is originally pre-Vedic and non-Aryan. It was latter on incorporated and assimilated into the classical hinduism. "The Harappans knew the use of copper, but there is little indication of their use of iron. In contrast, the Aryan invaders were essentially pastoral people. They used horses and chariots and had arrows of iron. Thus they were both physically and militarily better endowed than Harappans. Hence the Aryans conquered the Harappans and other pre-Aryan Natives of India. But from the view point of culture, religion and ascetic practices the Harappans and the pre-Aryan natives of India were superior. Therefore, in due course, the Aryan conquerors adopted a good deal of pre-existing Indians culture and religion. For this reason, it has been said that the Aryan God, Indra won the battles, but the non-Aryan God, Shiva ultimately won the war."

The Upanishads have rightly been designated as Vedanta or culmination and consummation of the Vedas. The Upanishadic seers and truth-seekers delved deep into the mysteries of evolution and involution and analysed the thought process of yoga in great detail. The Vedic thinkers sought to attain heavenly pleasures through sacrifice and other ritualistic practices. But the Upanishads declared the cessation of birth and death and the attainment of moksha as the summum bonum of human life. They found that post-mortem heavenly existence was a temporary phase which would terminate as soon as the merits earned through sacrifice were exhausted. The wanted a permanent solution to the problem of misery and human suffering, and they found the answer in the realization and identification of individual soul with the Universal Soul through yoga. They tell, how through yoga, one can attain the

state of samadhi or transcendental trance through the awakening of bodily centres combined with constant mediation. The yoga-practice helps in developing certain extraordinary powers, but they are a sure hindrance in the attainment of final goal of Self-realization, and can even be a source of fall and degeneration. Yoga is not merely a system of thought, but a practical and elaborate technique based on the steady and persisten meditation as a means to God-realization.

Yoga is a very comprhensive them and may mean different things in different contexts. In the present context, yoga means yoking, joining together, communion application, concentration, and mental abstraction. The term 'Yoga' is derved from Sanskrit 'yuj' which means what have been stated above. Yoga is the common foundation of all Hindu philosophic systems and practices. It is a link, a union, which unites the individual soul with the Universal Soul by consuming all the past accumulated karmas and their fruits. Yoga is a process which accelerates this union of the soul and the Over-soul. One who practices yoga is a yogi. Yogi-path is a path of total surrender, body, mind and soul to the will of the Supreme Being. The thought process of yoga subdues the sense and desires, stills the mind, burns the samskaras, and thereby imparts an inexpressible equipoise. This balance and harmony help the spirit soar high above the reach of illusions and duality, in the realm of perfect bliss, rest, non- duality and fulfilment. It is a kind of religious and spiritual experience which is regarded as the most sublime ideal in Hinduism.

"When the five organs of perception are still, together with the mind, when the reason does not function; this they ever to be the highest state.

This they deem to be yoga-the steady concentration of the senses. Man then becomes pure attention, or yoga is both origin and extinction."

—Kathopanishad, IV, 10-11

Yoga stands for complete union of the spirit with the Brahman or Ishvara. As the practice of self-concentration, it is intimately connected with Buddhism. It is an allinclusive awareness, a fathomless deep consciousness where all thoughts, samskaras, etc., get themselves dissolved and fused into a perfect harmony and equilibrium. Yoga as system of thought and technique is an integral part of Hindu sadhana and God-realization. A yogi, having attained this state of mental equipoise, continues to live as usual, but then the karmas do not bind him with their fruits. He reaches a state which is beyond both good and evil deeds pleasure and pain, in short, all duality.

"There a father becomes not a father; a mother not a mother;...He is not followed by good, he is not followed by evil, for then he has passed beyond all sorrows of the heart".

—Brihadaryanyakopanishad, IV, 3, 22.

"As water adheres not to the leaf of a lotus flower, so evil action adheres not to him who knows this Brahman".

—Chhandogyopanishad, IV, 14, 3.

If a man has the sense withdrawn as in sleep and a perfectly pure heart, he sees as if in a dream in the emptiness of the senses the pranava (Om), the leader whose form is light, who is beyond sleep, old age, death, and sorrow. Then he himself becomes the one who is called pranava, the leader whose form is light, who is beyond sleep, old age, death and sorrow. Thus it is said:

When the yogi unites his breath with Om
Or is united with the all in the manifold ways,
it is called yoga.
This oneness of breath, mind and senses,
the renunciation of all existence—
this is termed yoga."

—Maitri Upanishad, VI, 25

The great sage and grammarian Patanjali, who lived in the second century B.C., has defined yoga as "Chitravritti-nirodha". It means that yoga as a metaphysical system and technique is nothing else but the control and reorientation of mental modifications and fluctuations. The term "chitta" stands for mind, and "vrtti" denotes the fluctuations of mind or its restlessness. The term 'nirodha" signifies control or restraint of this restlessness. This constant mental restlessness can be controlled and eradicated by relentless regular yoga-sadhana. Thus, yoga symblizes awakening of all the latent spiritual potentia lities in a man or woman. It is meant for all men and women, without any distinction of caste, creed, seed, sex or community. It paves the path-way going to essential unity and oneness of all living beings, and their identification with Brahman. By seeing every living being as a partial expression of the Universal Soul, one realizes the oneness of life through yoga. Then, there dawns a deep sense of universal belonging, and one does not suffer from duality and division. It is a kind of depth awareness which enables the aspirtant to acquire discrimination (viveka), non- attachment (vairagya), peace and equipoise.

Sankhya and Yoga

The man, who observe rituals and rites, are like children in the field of religion, but a few of them might be potential spiritual giants, who soon give up such religious observances and rites, and take to yoga as a direct means to accelerate their evolution, and reach the ultimate goal of salvation or moksha. The Sankhya and Yoga schools of philosophy are closely related. These two systems of metaphysics stress that salvation is to be attained not by rites and rituals, but through self-discipline, exertion, mediation and knowledge. Kapila was the earliest exponent of Sankhya and Patanjali of Yoga. Their aim and methods of approach are so akin that they are often known by a single name of "Sankhya Yoga". The only difference being this that Sankhya lays more stress on jnana or knowledge and is atheistic while yoga lays stress on meditation and has God or Ishvara over and above everything. The Ishvare of yoga is not the creator of the universe in the ordinary sense of the term. He is the perfect Purusha and an example to man

to follow. Thus, God is one of the principles in Yoga for attaining salvation. It is total surrender and devotion to Ishvara combined with other disciplines which help the aspirant in achieving self-realization and release from bonds of human existence. Ishvara is not simply an ideal to be followed, but he is all mercy and compassion, and he helps the aspirants if they meditate on him and surrender at his feet. This God was symbolically represented in the sacred syllable Om (Aum) or pranava. It is a mystic monosnyllable, and an object of profound religious meditation. The highest spiritual powers are attributed not only to the whole word, but also to the sounds A, U, M, of which it is composed. Later on it began to represent the Hindu Triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar and their union. Om has been the most sacred syllable, a mantra, representing Supreme Reality. The sadhakas chant and meditate upon it for self-realization, fulfilment and attaining of moksha. It is regarded as the only syllable capable of symbolizing the ultimate reality and Absolute Brahman.

The earliest work extant on Sankhya is the Karika of Ishvara Krishna, and that on Yoga is the Sutra of Patanjali. Sankhya system is based on the duality of Purusha and Prakriti or spirit and nature. Prakriti is all pervasive and complex and the first cause out of which this universe is evolved. Prakriti is possessed of the three gunas or strands, the satrva, rajas and tamas, and therefore, everything emanating from it possesses these three gunas. The variety of the things is based on the different proportions of these gunas. Sankhya believes in plurality of spirits instead of One Atman. A Jivatma should gradually transcend these constituent gunas, with the help of Viveka or discriminative knowledge. Sankhya is called so because it is based on discriminative knowledge, and also because it enumerates 25 Tattvas, 24 of which are evolved out of Prakriti the First cause or Primordial Essence. The 25th being Purusha, which is neither Producer nor Production, but totally distinct from all other Tattvas. Sankhya aims at liberation of Jivatma from the fetters caused by the creation being produced by the contact of Purusha and Prakriti. Later on Prakriti came to be identified with the wives of the gods, especially with Shakti, the consort of Shiva. Purushas are innumerable. Through

ignorance a Purusha begins to identify himself with the body, the evolute of Prakriti. It is viveka which makes a soul realize its true nature of being pure, uninvolved, unattached and devoid of any activity. Age, death, suffering, pleasure, pain, etc., belong to the body. Therefore, man can work out his own liberation by possessing the jnana of the real nature of Purusha and Prakriti. Sankhya helds that there are souls but no Oversoul or Ishvara. It denies the existence of God and holds that he is not required at all for the salvation of a soul. There is no necessity of Ishvara for the universe is self-existent and things evolve from Prakriti without his intervention. Thus, Sankhya, Buddhism and Jainism have much in common. They all believe that bondage is because of avidya or nescience. Bondage entails birth and rebirth, death, suffering and pain, however, these can be overcome and salcation achieved by man's own exertion through descriminative knowledge or viveka.

The Four Paths

Archaeologically the story of yoga can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, but it is Vedanta or the Upanishads which laid the firm foundations of this science of soul and life. The identification and unity of the soul with Oversoul or Brahman and final release is central to all the yoga philosophies and systems. After the Vedanta, the Bhagavada Gita is the best known of all the treatises on yoga. Hinduism gives due consideration to the difference in mental make up, aptitude, etc., found in men. Therefore, there are four main paths of yoga to choose from, according to one's temperament, inclination and approach. All these paths ultimatley converge on that one and same centre. The goal is one, paths may be different. The following are the four main Yoga-Paths:

1. Karma Yoga.

2. Bhakti Yoga

3. Jnana Yoga.

4. Raja Yoga.

1. *Karma Yoga*

Karma means any action done voluntarily. A karma as a cause resulting in a definite effect, bad or good according to the action performed. The doer has to enjoy or suffer the results of his good or bad karma. He cannot escape it. Man enjoys the fruits of his past karmas and sows new seeds of action to be reaped in the next birth. Nobody can escape the karmas and their fruits. This creates an unending cycle of births and deaths. Fruits of our actions are to be consumed and exhausted. Thus, our karmas cause Samskaras and ceaseless bondage and suffering. Samskaras are impressions on the mind of acts done in a former state of existence. Work is natural to man. Complete cessation of work at any stage of life is impossible. As long as there is life and body there are actions. In the Gita Lord Krishna declares, "None can ever remain really actionless even for a moment, for everyone is helplessly driven to action by the Gunas, born of Prakriti". Work is essential and obligatory, none can dispense with actions:

"Engage yourself in obligatory work
for action is superior to inaction
and if inactive, even the mere
maintenance of your body would not be possible."

—The Gita, III, 8,

Actions are essential in this sense also that they are imitated and followed by others. Therefore, the people go by the example a great man sets up. Krishna is an incarnation of God. He has nothing to gain by performing acts. He has no desires to satisfy, no wish to fulfil, but even then he works for the good of the world:

"There is nothing in the three worlds,
that has not been done by Me,
nor anything that might be attained;
still I engage in action.
If ever I did not work relentless,
O Partha, men would in every respect follow my path.
These worlds would perish if I
did not do action; I should be
the cause of confusion of species and should destroy these beings."

—The Gita, III, 22-24

In such a state of bewilderment, where actions and their bondage are inevitable, Karma Yoga offers the only solution to the problem. In it lies the greatest hope for mankind, engaged in various worldly actions. It teaches how to attain worklessness in work, how to perform action without their fruits or bondage. Nishkama Karma is the only penance of this ubiquitous disease of bondage. In the Bhagvad Gita, Shri Krishna urges Arjuna to perform his duty as a warrior prince without any desire and egoism. A work done, not in the capacity of a doer or an agent, but as an instrument in the hands of God, without attachment, without desires and ego, without any consideration of success or failure, is the real nishkama and nrivatti karma. A work, done in this spirit, neutralize its binding effects. It is the renunciation of the fruits that is desirable, and not the non-action or renunciation of karma. Inaction in action is the ideal state. Shri Krishna asks Arjuna to perform his dharma as a soldier absorbed in yoga.

"Seek to perform your duty; but lay not
claim to this fruits. Be you not the producer
of the fruits of karma; neither
shall you lean towards inaction.

Perform action, O Dhananjaya, being fixed
in yoga, renouncing attachments,
and even-minded in success and failure;
equilibrium is verily yoga.

This wise, imbued with evenness of mind,
renouncing the fruits of their actions,
freed from the fetters of birth
verily go to the stainless stae."

—The Gita, II, 48-49, 51

Arjuna is urged to fight without identifying himself with it. Yoga is equipoise, and it is obtained when man acts with his mind established in the Self. It is really an illusion to consider oneself the doer of actions because, in fact, they are performed by the trigunatmika Prakriti. A karma yogi transcends three gunas by keeping himself aloof and unattached. A work done selflessly,

without attachment to fruits thereof, becomes Nrivatti Karma. The way to liberation lies in work without being identified with it. The right action is one that does not bound, and hence it is detached and desireless:

"But even these actions should be
performed giving up attachment
and the fruits, O Partha;
such is My certain and best belief."

—The Gita, XVIII, 6.

Non-action and lethargy is verily Tamasika. It is never proper to give up one's obligatory duty. The work done in a spirit of renunciation of its fruits is truly Sattvika, and so desirable:

"Whatever obligatory work is done,
O Arjuna, because it ought to be done,
abandoning attachment and also fruit,
That abandonment is deemed to be Sattvika.
The relinquisher imbued with Sattva
and a steady understanding and
with his doubts dispelled, hates not
a disagreeable work nor is attached
to an agreeable one.

—The Gita, XVIII, 8-10.

Renunciation and performance of action both liberate man, but the former is too difficult a path to tread, while the other is relatively easier and best suited to the majority of the people. Giving up work externally is not the aim, for them sense cravings continue resulting in fresh bondage. Thinking is also an act. Therefore, what is desirable is work willingly performed without any obsession and attachment. A karma-yogi holds himself as a mere witness of the doings of Prakriti. Then one achieves the state of worklessness in work and one's actions lose their binding effects. A karma-yogi is never disturbed by the possible success or failure or any kind of duality in regard to his work, because he holds himself as a mere willing instrument. In nishkama karma, knowledge and work are perfectly harmonized, and hence his equipoise and calmness

remains unaffected and unchanged.

"He who is free from the notion of egoism
and whose understanding is not tainted
though he kills the people,
he kills not, nor is he bound."

—The Gita, XVIII, 17,

Every action is inaction when done while established in yoga, and such an action loses its binding effects. A yogi offers the fruits of his action to the Lord. He knows well that he has a right to perform an action, and not to the fruits of it. Karma Yoga is the pathway leading to jnana and moksha. With the cessation of desires for fruits, actions themselves become inaction and lose their potency to bind. It is the path of purity, knowledge, peace, equipoise and true renunciation. When a work is done as an offering to God, it gives supreme purity and bliss but only the best is offered to God. Hence, only the Sattvika actions, done dispassionately, without any touch of ego, and with perfect mental equipoise, should be offered to the Lord. A work done in this spirit evolves into a nishkama karma and takes the instrument of it towards liberation. An obligation discharged without involvement, attachment and hatred, without any hankering after its fruit, is really Sattvika.

"An action which is ordained, which is free
from attachment, which is done without love
or hatred by one not desirious of the fruit that action is declared Sattvika.

—The Gita, XVIII, 23.

But a work becomes Rajaskia when done with desires or with egoism, or unwillingly with much efforts. The same work becomes Tamasika if done from delusion and without consideration of the consequences.

As we have already seen that all men are not alike in their mental make up, aptitude and standard of mental achievemet, and so they require different methods and techniques to evolve. The path of karma yoga suits them best who are active. They, by following

their duties and dharma selflessly, dispassionately, and devoutly, without any thought of success or failure, can sublimate and purify their soul to the level of perfection and thereby obtain salvation.

2. Bhakti Yoga

All the Yoga-paths overlap one another and lead to the same and one Reality. Bhakti is the path of devotion and total surrender to personal God. Here the realization and final release is through grace of God. Relatively this path is easier, and so its mass appeal is obvious. Brahman in his personal aspect is immanent, has attributes, adjuncts and a form. This aspect of God suits the great majority of the Hindus in comparison to the impersonal, formless and figurative absolute aspect, which appeals only to the exceptionally, well cultivated few. In personal aspect all human virtues are attributed to God, and yet he is free from all human limitations. Human mind and knowledge are finite and they cannot comprehend Brahman in all its infinity. Therefore, it is natural that when man tries to comprehend God, he superimposes all the human qualities on him, and he becomes personal, relative, possessed of a form and adjuncts, active, creator, preservator and destroyer. For a devotee he is the sole refuge, the father, mother, guru, brother, friend, solace, support and ultimate goal. He incarnates himself in human form at critical times when dharma is at its lowest ebb. He descends on the earth to establish dharma and righteousness, to preserve the noble and righteous and to destroy the wicked and demonic.

"Whenever there is decay
of dharma and rise of adharma,
then I embody Myself, O Bharata.

For the protection of the good,
for the destruction of the wicked and
for the establishment of dharma
I am born age after age."

—The Bhagavad Gita, IV, 7-8

Bhakti cult, as such, is of later origin, but it has been a tremendous force and religious movement since its inception. The ritualistic

propitation of gods in the Vedic times was later on replaced by the concept of God realization and attainment of moksha through intense devotion and Bhakti. Today its hold on the Hindu masses is phenomenal, and innumerable temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses and the worship offered to them there and in the houses, is a sure sign which indicates what a great religious movement and living force Bhakti has been in India.

Bhakti Movement originated in Tamil country in South about first century B.C. and since then its sweep and hold on the Hindus all over the country, has been firm and constant. It was brought to North India by Ramanuja in the eleventh century. Right from the earliest the great Vaishnava Tamil saints (3rd to 8th century A.D.), known as Alavars and Nayanars, to the present day, India has produced great Bhaktas including Ramanuja, Madhva, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Ravidas, Dadu, Tukaram, Purandar Das, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Surdas, Tulsidas, Meera, Samarth Ramdas, Swami Ramkrishna and scores others. They were not only great devotees but also great philosophers, hymnodists and authors, and have produced rich and immortal Bhakti-literature. They were also great reformers and servants of the society. The entire Hindu world owes an incalcu labledebt to these great singers, saints and philosophers.

In the words of Basham, "Ramanuja's God was a personal being, who was full of love for his creation. He could even override the power of karma to draw repentant sinners to him. Unlike the impersonal World Soul of Sankara, which made the illusory universe in a sort of sport (lila), Ramanuja's God needed man as man needed God. By forcing the sense Ramanuja interpreted the words of Lord Krishna, 'the wise man I deem my very self', to imply that just as man could not live without God, so God could not live without man. The individual soul, made by God out of his own essence, returned to its maker and lived forever in full communion with him, but was always distinct. It shared the divine nature of omniscience and bliss, and evil could not touch it, but it was always conscious of itself as am I, for it was eternal by virtue of its being a part of godhead, and if it lost self- consciousness it would cease to exist. It was one with God but yet separate, and for

this reason the system Ramanuja was called visistadvaita, or 'qualified monism'. Ramanuja was not as brilliant a metaphysician as Sankara, but Indian religion perhaps owes even more to him than to his predecessor. In the centuries immediately following his death his dieas spread all over India, and were the starting-point of most of the devotional sect of later times."

In the Bhagvad Gita and the Narada Bhakti Sutras, the subject of Devotion has been delineated in great detail in verses and terse aphorisms. In the Gita Lord Krishna categorically states: "Neither by the study of the Vedas, nor by austerity nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me. But by unswerving devotion can I, of this form, be known and seen in reality and also entered into, O scorcher of foes. He who does work for Me, who looks on Me as the Supreme, who is devoted to Me who is free from attachment, who is without hatred for any being, he comes to me, O Pandava" (XI, 53-55). Intense love, devotion, total surrender, incessant remembrance, renunciation, purity, self-control, self-obnegation are the hall marks of true Bhakti.

Devotion is of two kinds: Para and Apara. Former is superior to the latter in the sense that it is totally desireless, there is no bargaining, and the devotee sees. Him alone, hears Him alone, speaks of Him alone and thinks of Him alone. It is devotion pure and unalloyed devoid of any sense of separateness from the Godhead. In this regard Gopi's love for Shri Krishna is cited as the best form of dovotion and Bhakti. The following psalm from saint Tukaram marvellously brings out the intense love, longing and phags of separation suffered by a devotee's heart:

"An on the bank the poor fish lies
And gasps and writhes in pain,
Or as a man with anxious eyes
Seeks hidden gold in vain,
So is my heart distressed and cries
To come to thee again.

Thou knowest, Lord, the agony
Of the lost infant's wail,
Yearning his mother's face to see

(How oft I tell this tale!)
O at thy feet the mystery
Of the dark world unveil!

The fire of this harassing thought
Upon my bosom preys.
Why is it I am thus forgot?
(O, who can know thy ways?)
Nay, Lord, thou seest my hapless lot;
Have mercy, Tuka says."

In Bhakti, it is love, pure, intense, all-inclusive and ever constant that forms the only measuring-rod:

"Thy nature is beyond the grasp
Of human speech or thought.
So love I've made the measure-rod,
By which I can be taught.

Thus with the measure-rod of love
I meet the Infinit.
In sooth, to measure him there is
None other means so fit.
Not Yoga's power, nor sacrifice,
Nor fierce austerity,
Nor yet the strength of thought profound
Hath ever found out thee.

And so, says Tuka, graciously,
Oh Kesav, take, we pray
Love's service that with simple hearts
Before thy feet we lay."

The paths of karma, bhakti and jnana not only overlap and gainfully intersect one another, but it is also desirable that they are judiciously combined to reach the goal of salvation. The Bhagvad Gita underlines and teaches "a life of activism grounded upon knowledge and centralized around the adoration of the Lord". Ultimately the three streams coalesce and form a kind of confluence where the ecstatic union with Ishvara is realized by the aspirant. There cannot be any watertight compartments and

division of Yoga into various paths is owing to the difference in the genera! mental make up and aptitude of the people. Even in Bhakti cult itself the difference in individual inclinations and tastes is given due consideration. Therefore, it is enjoined that one should devout oneself to one's favourite deity, Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Ganesha, Mother Goddess or any other manifestation of God, but without any hatred and discrimination against any other expression of divinity. Each cult has contributed in the growth and development of another cult. Great exertion, attention, devotion and intense eagerness are common to Bhakti, Jnana and Karma alike. They differ initially to suit the different mental make ups and temperaments, but in the ultimate consummation they are akin and alike.

3. Jnana Yoga

Man's intense desire to seek release from bondage born of ignorance, and search for the truth, leads him to Yoga. But one man differs from the other in mental make up spiritual standard and aptitude. Therefore, what path and technique suit one, may not suit another. That is why there are different paths going to the same goal. An intelligent man, possessed of contemplative bent of mind would naturally take to Jnana Yoga, the path of knowledge and discrimination, though it is said to be the most difficult one. But then, man enjoys best achieving that which is most difficult to attain.

Man is the most intelligent and national being. Rationality at its best lies in the discrimination of the real and true from false, and ephemeral. The Jnana Yoga is based on the rock- foundation of unreality of everything except Atman or Brahman. The world of names, forms and colours is a mere illusion. Since all appearances are deceptive, they are unreal and not permanent. Only Atman is the only Reality. Thus, unreality of things, and reality and eternity of Atman is the article of faith with the seeker of truth, and yogi. A jnana yogi exercises his faculties of reason, and treads the path of wisdom. And it requires tremendous moral and intellectual strength on the part of such an aspirant. He enquires into the nature of everything, including himself, through discrimination and

determination. Self-realization and communion with Absolute, demand persistent effors, relentless search and sadhana.

He knows, believes and realizes the essential underlying unity of all the creation. He knows that he is Thta, he is Brahman, and all others also are Atman. All are That; the Atman, the experiencer of all beings, is verily That. He realizes that Atman is all-pervasive, eternal, changeless, Sat-Chitta-Anand; Existence-Knowledge-Bliss absolute. This he realizes by intense meditation and sadhana, by raising himself to the level of super-consciousness, where there is no duality. Then he becomes jivanamukta and attains liberation. Thus, the state of release and moksha is not a post-mortem stage but a reality here and now, in this very life. The belief terminates in realization. This marks the end of the quest and sadhana; the centre of gravity is now totally tranferred to the Self.

It is the most difficult of the four paths, but in the same proportion does its desirability increase. Underlying this fact, the great saint poet and bhakta Tulsidas says in his famous work, the Ramayana:

"In this manner is kindled the splendid lamp, ablaze with highest wisdom, in which the gnat-like swarms of vanity and other vices are consumed as soon as they approach it.

"I am that'—this unalterable persuasion (of the identification of the self with God) is its pre-eminently brilliant flame, and the happiness that results from this knowledge of self is the light it diffuses, by which it destroys the erroneous distinctions which are born of the world. Illusion and all the other forms of darkness that attend upon tyrant Ignorance are utterly dispersed. Thus Reason having procured a light sits in the chamber of the heart and tries to loosen the knot; should he succeed in untying it, the soul obtains its object. But when Maya, O Garur, sees him loosening the knot, she creates many difficulties and sends forth, Brother, innumerable elves and fairies to tempt the Reason to avarice. In some way or other, by force or by fraud, they get near and try to put out the lamp by a side puff. If Reason is altogether wise, he perceives their hostile intent and will not look at them. Should he escape free from this danger, the gods then proceed to attack him. The faculties of sense are so many portals, at each of which a god sits on guard.

When they see any sensual air stirring, they at once throw the doors wide open. If the blast penetrates the chamber of the soul, it forthwith extinguishes the lamp of knowledge. When its light is put out, there is no untying the knot, for Intelligence is undone by this blast of sensuality. Neither the senses nor the gods approve of wisdom; they are always inclined to sensual enjoyment. When Intelligence has been thus fooled by the breath of sensuality, who can light the lamp again as before?

"Then, Garur, the soul is again subjected to all the manifold miseries of transmigration. Hari's delusive power is a trackless ocean that none can traverse. Wisdom is difficult to describe, difficult to understand, difficult to master, and if by any lucky chance a right judgement by formed, still many impediments block the way.

"The way of knowledge is like the edge of a scimitar; for those who fall on it, Garur, there is no escape. If any traverse the path in spite of its difficulty, they attain to the supreme sphere of beatitude. But this exalted felicity is immensely hard of attainment, as is declared by the saints, the Puranas, the Vedas and all the Scriptures."

It is easier to concentrate on personal God, who is with attributes and adjuncts, but in Jnana Marga the aspirant meditates upon formless, figurative absolute Brahman. It is a path of negation, where the sadhaka negates every attribute, form and name in the Upanishadic spirit of "neti, neti" (not this, not this), and thereby arrives at the Reality, and true identity with it. The aspirant refuses to accept any other thing, but the eternal Reality. Jnana is knowledge, practice and realization, all rolled into one. It purifies and consumes all the sins and samskaras. Lord Krishna urges Arjuna in the Gita to seek this knowledge and enlightenment by enquiry and service:

"Knowing this, you will not fall into this confusion;
by this you will see the whole of the creation
in yourself and Me.
Even if you be most sinful of all sinners,
yet shall you cross over all sin

by the raft of knowledge.
As this blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes,
O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge

reduce all karmas to ashes.
Verily there is no purifier in this world
like knowledge. He that is perfected
in yoga realizes it in his own heart
in due time."

—The Gita, IV, 35-38.

Pointing the path and technique of jnana Krishna says:

"With work absolved in yoga,
and doubts rent asunder by knowledge,
O Dhanajaya, action do not bind
him who is poised in the Self.

Therefore severing with the sword of knowledge
this ignorace-born doubt about the Self,
dwelling in your heart, be established
in yoga. Stand up, O Bharat!"

—The Gita, IV, 41-42

'With his intellect set in firmness
let him attain quietude little by little;
with the mind fixed on the Self.

Let him not think of anything.
By whatever cause the wavering
and unsteady mind wanders away,
let him curb it from that,
and subjugate it solely to the Self."

— The Gita, VI, 25-26

Thus, yoga entails constant, deep and prolonged sessions of meditation till the desired depth experience and the insight leading to Self-realization dawn. Control of senses and mind, coupled with Vairagya (renunciation) and sradha, is basic to jnana yoga. When the senses are not subjugated, the mind is led astray by the senses,

and then man develops attachment to them; from it comes desire, and from desire arise delusion, confusion and ruination leading to damnation. A fickle-minded man can never acquire knowledge, and so the question of contemplation and meditation does not arise for him. 'Subjugation' here means control and sublimation, and never suppression. Again the Gita shows the path:

"He who is unattached everywhere,
who is not delighted at receiving good
nor dejected at coming by evil,
is poised in wisdom.

Sense objects drop out for the abstinent man, though
not the longing for them. His longing also ceases when he intuits the Supreme.

The excited senses, O son of Kunti,
impetuously carry away the mind
of even a wise man,
striving for perfection."

—The Gita, II, 59-60.

4. Raja Yoga

Yoga is a spiritual discipline, which enables a jivatma to identify himself with, or be united to God or Brahman. In is a discriminative knowledge with helps one in attaining salvation by removing the bondage caused by ignorance or avidya. It is avidya which causes the confusion of taking non self as Self and non-permanent as permanent. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, consisting of 185 sutras or terse aphorisms, has been the source book and foundation of Raja Yoga. As already stated, Patanjali defines yoga as the "Chitta-vritti nirodha", or restraint of the fluctuations and modifications of the mind. In a yoga-state the mind, including intellect and ego (ahamkara) are under control and free from fluctuations, so that the mind rests in the spirit within, and consequently a jivatma is then is communion with God. Then, the state of an aspirant is like that of a lamp in a windless room without any flicker. Spirit or soul is originally pure, peaceful, changeless and non-doer, but because of ignorance and predominance of any

of the three gunas, it begins to identify itself with body, ego, intellect or mind and suffers pleasure, pain and such other emotions. Moved and agitated by fluctuations of mind, it identifies itself with the object with which it comes in contact and experiences pain, sorrow, pleasure and joy.

Ashtanga Yoga (*Eight Limbs of Yoga*)

Final release or moksha is the end, and yoga is the means. Means are as important as the end to be achieved. The means should be as noble and just as is the end and object in view. Raja Yoga is an invaluable aid in meditation leading to an insight into the real and original nature of the soul, which is ever pure and changeless. Raja Yoga is a pepth experience, a highly developed psycho-physical technique, a practical wisdom which consists of eight stages or limbs enumerated by Patanjali as under:

1. Yama or ethical principles of self-control, are five in number. They are called ahimsa or noninjury, satya or truthfulness, asteya or non-stealing, aparigraha or non- conveting, and brahmcharya or continence.

2. Niyama or observances include saucha or purity santosh or cotentment, tapas or austerity, svadhyaya or study of the holy scriptures, and Ishvara pranidhana or dedication and devotion to the Lord.

3. Asanas or body postures are 84 in number, but only a few of them are essential as an aid to meditaion. An easy sitting posture can be chosen by the aspirant to maintain the constant and steady concentration. The most basic posture is Padmasana or the Lotus Pose. This pose symbolizes man's spiritual growth, purity and peace, and in this posture alone the rishis, gods and divinities are commonly shown meditating.

4. Pranayama or breath control teaches how to regulate breath and thereby control the fluctuations and modifications of the mind.

5. Pratyahar or withdrawal of the senses.

6. Dharana or steadying the mind by concentrating on an object for a stretch of time. The object may be the tip of your nose, the point

between the eye-brow, a flowers, an idol or picture of a deity or flame of a candle.

7. Dhyana or meditation is a state when a yogi's consciousness is fully absorbed in the object of meditation.

8. Samadhi or state of trance is a condition of superconsciousness, when the yogi becomes one with the object, that is, God, and his body-consciousness is completely dissolved.

The first three stages of yama, niyama and asanas are called external (bahiranga) sadhana. Yama-niyamas are the rules of conduct which help an aspirant to be in harmony with his environment and fellow-men by overcoming his passions and emotions. Various body postures and poses keep the body fit and elastic. Asanas, coupled with rhythimic and regulated breathing, make a perfect tonic for our radiant mental and physical health.

The next two stages, pranayama and pratyahara, teach how to control breath and maintain steadiness of mind, and thereby overcome the body-consciousness. Our mental activities are intimately connected with our breathing. Regulated and rhythmic breathing helps a lot in our sense-withdrawal and restraint of mental fluctuations. Many of our ills are more mental than physical. If man is mentally healthy, the body will take care of itself without much efforts. These two limbs or stages of yoga are known as internal (antaranga) sadhana.

The last three stages—dharna, dhyana and samadhi—are called the innermost (antaratma) sadhana, and lead the aspirant to the highest ideal of God or self-realization. During these final stages of spiritual growth, the mind becomes purer in essence and ultimately one with the Ishvara or Brahman, the object of contemplation and meditation. Mind is the Monarch or Raja of the senses. A Raja Yogi is one who has conquered his mind, the king of the senses. Raja Yoga or the Royal Yoga teaches how to control mino and withdraw the senses from the objects of their interst. When one has conquered his passions, emotions, thoughts and mind, he becomes a Raja Yogi, a fit person to be one and united with his Creator and God. Raja Yoga aims at the sublimation and release of the spirit by

balanced psycho-physical development. Body is a vehicle and an in- strument, which must be brought to the level of perfection as a preparation for spiritual evolution and illumination. In the final stage of samadhi the knower, the knowledge, and the known lose their separate identities and become inseparably one. This identity and unity between sadhaka, sadhana, and sadhya is the quintessence to be realized and perfected through yogic technique discipline culminating in the state of samadhi or super-consciousness.

Samadhi is the sumum bonum, the summit of the efforts and end of the long quest. It is like the dreamless state of deep sleep when there is no feeling of 'I' or 'mine'. With it the sadhaka attain the state of perfect peace, bliss, pure consciousness and rest, a state which defies description and definition, a thing to be felt and experienced and not to be described and uttered. The path to this goal is narrow, difficult and sharp like the razor's edge. The path of yoga is beset with difficulties. The storms of mental fluctuations continue to agitate the water of mind, and then there is no mental equipoise and peace. Then there are very many hindrances and obstacles like laziness, diseases, doubts, indecision, indifference, lack of proper motivation, sensual cravings, want of continuity of efforts and score others. Keeping in view all these obstacles, our rishis have prescribed these above aids, which should be constantly used and assiduously practised. Ceaseless efforts and sadhana or practice is the key factor in the progress on the path of spirit. Spiritual sadhana is a supreme endeavour and requires utmost exertion and practice.

Between Ida and Pingla nadis flows the Sushumana nadi, the main channel of psychic energy. It runs through the spinal column. It is intersected by the two other nadis at different points, and at these points are located the six chakras (plexus) or centres of psychic energy. The lowest Chakra is called Muladhara, and is situated in the pelvic region behind the genitals. Then comes the Svadhisthana Chakra above it. Manipuraka Chakra is the third and is located at the navel; Anahata Chakra is in cardiac region; Vishuddha in pharyngeal region and Ajana Chakra is located at a point between the eyebrows. Then there is Sahashrara, the thousand-petalled lotus

Chakra, at the top of the Sushumana. It is the most powerful wheel of psychic force and energy. The Ida and Pingla veins rise from the base of the spine and terminate in the left and right nostrils. They represent the lunar and solar energies respectively.

In Muladhara wheel, the lowest centre, lies dormant the Kundalini, the 'serpent power' or the celestial cosmic force. The aim and object of yogic practices is to awaken this latent psychic energy. When it is aroused and made to reach the topmost Chakra of Sahasrara, piercing through all the other Chakras, a tremendous spiritual strength and energy is released within, and the yogi attains salvation. This process of wakening the 'serpent power' and making, it unite in the topmost wheel also results in the attainment of many supernatural powers, but they are, in fact, obstacles in the path of final release and moksha, and therefore to be eschewed and avoided.

With the awakening of this cosmic power and its union in the highest Chakra, one attains the state of super consciousness, where the 'I' and mine' cease to exist and God is no longer held as personal. He is then experienced as the pure Consciousness. Then all the dualities of personal and impersonal, absolute and relative, pleasure and pain, immanence and transcendence cease, and one becomes united with the Supreme Being.

Yoga Vasistha

It is one of the most important works in the Hindu philosophy. All aspects of Darshanas (Hindu philosophies), right from Samkhya to Vedanta are intricately woven into the Yoga Vasistha. The principal figures in this book are Lord Rama and sage Vasistha. Just like the Bhagavad Gita, this is a dialogue between sage Vasistha and Lord Rama. Sage Vasistha advises Rama on all aspects of life.

Yoga Vasistha contains 29,000 verses. Since this book emerged from the epic Ramayana, it is believed that sage Valmiki wrote this book also. Sage Vasistha is an important figure in Hinduism. Manu refers to Vasistha as one of the exponents of Hinduism. Adi Sankarchargy refers to him as the first sage of the Vedanta school.

It is believed that this book was written during the 7th century A.D.

One of the most important parts of the Yoga Vasistha is the doctrine of mind. According to this book when the mind vibrates, the world comes to existence, and when the wind stops vibrating, the world is destroyed.

The language and style of the Yoga Vasistha is very poetic. It is filled with fantastic stories and very philosophical discourses. Sage Valmiki ends Yoga Vasistha with a statement that, he who listens to the dialogue between sage Vasistha and Lord Rama will be liberated and will attain knowledge of the Brahman.

Yuddha Kanda

The Great March

Rama heard with rapt attention and in detail about Sita, about Hanuman's exploits in Lanka. Delighted then Rama said, "Indeed, Hanuman's accomplishments are excellent. No one else can achieve them. He has given me a new lease of life by bringing the news of Sita. Would that, I could reward him adequately! Let this affectionate embrace of mine be a testimony of my gratitude." With these words, he again embraced Hanuman and said to Sugriva, "Now we know where Janaki is, but I don't quite know how our army will across the sea before we siege Lanka?" But Sugriva reassuring Rama said. "O hero! why this lamentation? We are sure to cross over to Lanka and to destroy Ravana. The mighty Vanara warriors are ready to lay down their lives for your cause. Once we have devised the means of crossing the sea, victory is ours."

Rama's spirits thus being revived by these inspiring words, he asked Hanuman about the strength of the enemy, the defences of the army. Thereupon, Hanuman said, "Lanka is a migthy city, surrounded by an impregnable golden wall and then huge moat. Ravana is a formidable enemy, yet we can defeat him once we reach there. We have matchless heroes like Angada, Dwida, Jambuvana, Nala and Neela. Defences of Lanka are nothing before these warriors."

In very auspicious moments the huge army set out towards the south. Neela went in advance leading a big army, examining the route and looking out for the enemies in ambush. The army pressed forward with speed like an agitated ocean. At times Rama and Lakshmana were carried on the shoulders by the mighty monkeys to maintain speed. While marching ahead, Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Angada talked about the course of the future action. They met with auspicious signs all the way to their destination. The dust raised by the feet of the vast army covered the sun and the four quarters. The Vanaras indulged in various sports. They uprooted trees, ate fruits, flowers, roots and honey and did many monkey-pranks.

Having crossed several hills, mountains, rivers, hills and forests, they reached Mahendra mountain and from the top of the mountain they saw the vast expanse of the sea, ever agitated by wind and storm. The constant rising and falling hill- like waves produced a roar which matched with that of monkeys. They got down the mountain and reached the seashore. The troops camped in the forest along the shore. Rama was again seized by sorrow and dejection thinking of Sita's hapless lot in Lanka. Lakshmana then said many a sweet and inspiring word to Rama to dispell his doublts and fears.

Ravana in Council

There in Lanka, Ravana alarmed at Hanuman's recent exploits consulted his ministers, counsellors and friends to decide the future course oof action. Many *Rakshasha* warriors then raising their lethal weapons said, "We shall destroy Rama and Lakshmana and cut into pieces the monkey who put Lanka on fire."

Whereupon Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, said with folded hands, "O brother! hasty decisions are bound to lead us to grief. War should be resorted to as a last course. War with Rama will lead us to ruin. Rama has not done any harm to us. On the contrary, the abduction of Sita is a great sin. He slew Khara and others in Janasthana in self-defence. Before starting a war let us ascertain the enemy's strength. We have already seen Hanuman's valour and it cannot be dismissed lightly. I implore you, O king, to

return Janaki to Rama. My brother, don't take offence. It is for all our good."

Ravana then adjourned the council for the next day and retired to his palace. On the following day, Vibhishana again went to Ravana. He had been thinking hard over the matter and had arrived at certain firm conclusions. He said to his brother meekly, "O king! many evil portents has been perceived since janaki's arrival in Lanka. Restore her to Rama, lest it should be too late. Forgive me for this plain speaking."

This sincere advice of wise Vibhishana enraged Ravana very much and he said angrily, "There is nothing to be afraid of Rama. The question of returning Sita does not arise at all. Now you may leave."

Ravana one day came to the royal council hall and summoned all the chiefs of Rakshashas and counsellors. Kumbhakarna, Ravana's brother, rose first and said, "The time to decide has already gone by the moment you kidnapped Sita. To abduct another's wife is a crime and the present crists is a direct result of this. This is not the way of doing things. However, I shall fight with Rama to finish and confer victory on you. Hence be cheerful and enjoy yourself."

Other *Rakshashas* bragged and boasted of their strength and cheered up Ravana. They were all slow of understanding and quite foolish. Ravana's commander-in-chief Prahasta encouraged the king of *Rakshashas* to enjoy himself freely with Janaki without any fear, and the rest of the assembly, except Vibhishana, applauded him.

Pious and noble Vibhishana then said to Ravana, "O king! Sita is a deadly snake. Send her back to Rama. There is none among our heroes who can slay Rama. You are being ill-advised. I tell you frankly and for your good—return Sita to Rama." Indrajit then said, 'Uncle! Don't be a coward. Even an ordinary person can slay the two princes. I have conquered Indra and gods, what are these two puny men? Shall I be ever afraid of these?" Vibhishana returned, "My son! You do not know what you are saying. You lack experience and maturity yet. O king! Return Sita even now, so

that we all may live in peace."

Ravana now grew furious and said, "You are really my enemy in the guise of a brother. I am well aware of the traitors like you, who are to be feared most. You are jealous of my wealth, glory and victories. You are a villian through and through. Had you not been my younger brother, I would have at once beheaded you."

Vibhishana Seeks Refuge

These words full of insult and hatred were too much to bear for Vibhishana. He rose, warned Ravana against his impending doom and then realizing that there was hardly any toom for him in Lanka, he repaird to the place where Rama was. He was followed by four of his good friends.

Sugriva was the first to espy Vibhishana from a distance. He grew apprehensive and pointed it put to Hanuman and others. Vibhishana appeared before Sugriva and told him that he had come to Rama to seek refuge, having abandoned everything in Lanka, the city of wicked Ravana. The matter was reported to Rama and he sought the advice of the Vanara chiefs, and they advised him caution, considering Vibhishana to be an enemy spy. But Hanuman did not agree with others and found Vibhishana above any suspicious. He did not notice anything diplomatic about him. Hanuman saw Vibhishana's sincerity and so advised Rama accordingly. Having heard all the views from Vanara chiefs, Rama, the magnimous, said, "Vibhishana has come as a friend seeking shelter and I cannot say no., It is against *dharma* not to protect a supplicant. What does it matter that he happens to be Ravana or Vibhishana." So saying Rama fell silent.

Vibhishana was brought into Rama's presence and Rama assured him of his eternal protection and friendship. On being asked about Ravana's strength Vibhishana said, "Ravana is indestructible because of a boon. Heroic Kumbhakarna is his another brother and Indrajit, the conqueror of Indra, his son. Prahasta is his general and Mahodara, Akampana etc. his other commanders. They are as valiant as Ravana himself. I am Ravana's youngest brother. I shall render you help in Ravana's destruction as far as I can."

Rama was very much pleased with these words and embraced Vibhishana. Then he ordered Lakshmana to fetch water from the sea. Lakshmana brought water from the sea and Vibhishana was instantly a anointed and crowned as the king of Lanka. Vibhishana requested Rama to appraoch the sea to seek its help for going across to Lanka. This gladdened Rama's heart and he promptly prepared himself for the task.

Meanwhile, Ravana the crafty sent a spy named Suka to seduce Sugriva from his loyalty to Rama. Suka assumed the form of a bird and approached Sugriva but he was caught by the Vanaras and was about to be killed when Rama saved him hearing his pitiful cries of supplication. Sugriva asked him to tell wicked Ravana that he would be killed very soon at Rama's hands. Being an enemy of Rama, he was Sugriva's enemy too. The spy flew back to his master and delivered the message.

The Wonderful Causeway

Rama lay down on the grass, determined either to please the ocean or to dry it up. For three nights and days he prayed to the ocean but without any success. It angered Rama. He said to Lakshmana, "Do you see this haughty god of the sea? How proud he has been to mistake my prayers and meekness as my weakness. I shall dry up the ocean even now. Fetch my bow and arrow.;;

Rama then bending his tall bow discharged a very powerful arrow, producing a thundering noise. Having entered the sea, the arrow agitated the water to its depths and it began to boil and exhale steam. The animals living in this waters were sore distressed, and the Sea-god could not stand it any longer. So the Sea-god appeared and stood with folded hands before Rama and said, "O Rama! I follow my nature. How can I give up bottomeless depth, impassable vastness and restleness, which are part and parcel of my eternal nature? But I can permit a causeway to be built over me. Order the Vanaras and Bhalukas to bring the boulders, rocks and trees for the purpose. I shall remain calm to allow the construction and its maintenance. Vishwakarma's son, the monkey Nala, is in your army. He is proficient in construction. Let him construct a bridge over me and I shall support it on my surface. For your sake I

shall not hesitate to be bound by a bridge." With these words the Sea-god disappeared into its ocean depths.

Nala was as skillful as his father in construction. He came forward and confirmed what the Sea-god had said. Nala had received a boon from his father. Nala set to build the causeway and the monkeys and bears brought huge rocks and tall trees. They uprooted tall trees and huge boulders and carried them off in sport. The heroic Nala, with the help of Vanaras, thus started building a hundred-league-long bridge over the sea.

The continual hurling of rocks and trees mightily agitated the sea and produced a deafening din. It took fivedays in all to construct this mighty bridge to the other side of the sea. It was ten-leagues wide and hundred long. The gods appeared in the sky to have a look at this wonderful bridge. Vibhishana, with mace in hand, guarded the southern end of the bridge. With him his four ministers also stood guard. Then they went across the sea. Hanuman carried Rama on his shoulders, and Angads took Lakshmana on his. Some Vanaras went near the bridge, some flew through the sky and some swam across. Hurrahing, "Victory to Rama!" the monkey army gradually crossed the sea. The deafening noise thus produced mingled with the thundering roar of the ocean, echoing all the quarters.

Meanwhile, Ravana sent spies one after the other ascertain Rama's real strength, the number of troops and their nature. But the *Rakshashas* this sent were caught spying and belaboured by the monkeys, but Rama the benefactor of all living beings, allowed them to go unharmed. They came to Ravana and reported what they had seen. They reported the completion of the wonderful bridge, the arrival of the formidable army at the entrance of Lanka and advised Ravana to return Sita or be prepared for the inevitable. It made Ravana extremely worried and he held consultations with his ministers. He called his wizard and ordered him to create the head and bow of Rama by his magic to delude Janaki. Ravana went to Sita and said, "Be my wife, I have slain Rama. See for yourself Rama's head and bow. My heroic general Prahasta has brought these after slaying Rama."

Sita, seeing the served head of Rama before her, was overwhelmed with grief. She broke forth into a flood of tears, lamented and rolled in the dust. Then Sarma, a good *Rakshashi*, told Sita how she had been deluded by magic. She said that Rama was alive and along with Lakshmana and the monkey army had crossed the ocean and was about to strike. Thus she revived Janaki, the woebegone, with her sweet, soothing words. In the meantime, Rama's army advanced further towards Lanka resounding the quarters with trumpets and conches blowing. This was heard by Sita as well as Ravana. It delighted Sita exceedingly but made Ravana nervous.

Ravana sat in war council, surrounded by his ministers and warriors. Malyavan, the aged *Rakshasha*, then tried his utmost to make Ravana understand his sin. He said, "O king! Return Janaki and seek peace with Rama. he is more powerful than you because he is virtuous." But the doomed Demon King could not tolerate these words and snarled in frown, "How dare you speak like this? Why do you think Rama formidable? Of course, Rama has reached Lanka by building a bridge but that is a sheer accident and there is nothing to be afraid of." Then Ravana made elaborate arrangements for the defence of Lanka.

Rama, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavana and Angada held a war council to decide the course of action. Then Vibhishana laid before them the secret information gathered by his scouts about the enemy. Marshalling the army, Rama gave his commanders detailed directions. Nala was directed to challenge Prahasta in the east, Angada was to engage Mahodera in the south. In the west, Hanuman would meet Indrajit. Rama and Lakshmana were to meet Ravana, and Sugriva and Jambuvana were assigned the task to assist the main army. The army ascended the beautiful Suvela mountain for night rest and on the following morning, they had a full view of magnificent Lanka situated on the top of Trikuta Hill.

Ravana was clearly visible from there. He was standing at the city gate. Seeing him Sugriva came down the hill and sprang upon Ravana in anger. They wrestled together for a long time, bleeding, beating each other with fists and slaps and finally they both rolled on the ground. Ravana then tried to employ magic and heroic

Sugriva sprang up and returned to Rama. Rama was glad at Sugriva's safe return but then warned him never to repeat such an exploit for it was not for a king to take such risks.

The Vanara army descending the Suvela mountain surrounded Lanka on all sides in preparation to attack. The cloud-like formation of Vanaras, their thundering noise and great number astonished the *Rakshashas.* Rama then called Angada and said, "Go as my messenger to Ravana and tell him your end is near. You cannot escape death. It has been too long. Return Sita or come out bidding farewell to your wives. I am waiting to kill you."

Angada flew fast and alighted beside Ravana and delivered Rama's message, "I am Angada, Vali's son and Rama's envoy. Return Janaki and surrender unto Rama's feet or it is time for you to be liberated from this sinful life. Rama waits outside Lanka to despatch you to Heaven."

Whereupon four terrible *Rakshashas,* at Ravana's command, immediately seized Angada and he jumped up on the roof and the *Rakshashas* fell down. Angada in anger then attacked and broke down a lofty tower into pieces and giving out a heroic yell returned to Rama.

The Siege of Lanka

The information that Lanka has been besieged by Rama's army exceedingly enraged Ravana. In anger Ravana got up a tower of his palace and leaning on his hands along the ramparts surveyed the enemy army. He saw the golden-haired Sugriva, the veteran hero Jambuvana and near him long-haired young Angada busy in war preparation. He saw Hanuman saying something to Rama and he wondered how he could conquer that vast sea of Vanaras spread all around Lanka?

Meanwhile, Rama looked at Lanka and found it well fortified and protected. Then he thought of Sita and her grief and was filled with pain. He ordered an immediate attack and the vanaras shouting. "Victory to Rama!" uprooted huge rocks and tall tress and entered Lanka in great numbers. They battered and made a breach in the outer wall surrounding the city. Ravana ordered his army to attack.

The *Rakshashas* with a great cry and beating of drums and blowing of conches and trumpets, fell upon the Vanaras and fierce battle ensued. The Vanaras rushed upon the *Rakshashas* with boulders, stones and trees. They used their sharp and nails to kill the enemy.

Innumerable warriors fell dead on either side, and the ground was covered with blood, limbs and broken chariots. The battle continued unabated throughout the day. Angada fought a duel against Indrajit, Hanuman agaisnt Jambumalin, Lakshmana against Virupaksha and Nala against Prapan and so on. Blood began to flow in streams. Horses and warriors were slain, chariots smashed and duels fought and won. Many *Rakshashas* in the body attacked Rama but with a fatal arrow he cut off their heads.

At last, the sun went down and night fell, increasing the strength of nightover *Rakshashas.* The battle grew fiercer and fiercer, and it looked as if it was the night of final dissolution. *Rakshashas* concentrated their attack on Rama. But he, with his flaming serpent like arrows, destroyed them. Angada fighting with Indrajit, destroyed his chariot, charioteer and the horses with great fifficulty Indrajit made his escape good. Indrajit was greatly agitated at the humiliation and he smote Rama and Lakshmana with deadly arrows and bound both the horses with Nagapasa. They lay helpless not knowing what to do. Alarmed and frightened, the vanara host began to weep. Meanwhile, Indrajit remained hidden in the sky by his magic and smote Vanara chiefs and finally returned trumphant to Lanka and his father Ravana.

The Vanara host, defeated and downcast, thought that everything was over. But Vibhishana encouraging and rallying them said, "Don't lose heart. Rama and Lakshmana are not dead. They will soon gain consciousness and resume fighting."

In Lanka Ravana's had it proclaimed that the Rama and Lakshmana have been killed by Indrajit. At Ravana's behest behest *Rakshashis* went to Sita and told her of Rama and Lakshamana's death. They took her up in the Pushpak Vimana to show both the princes lying unconscious on the field, with their weapons scattered about them. Overwhelmed with grief, Sita cried in lamentation. She thought it was all over. But then Trijata asked Sita to take courage,

"Worshipful lady! Don't weep. The princes are alive. Believe me, I am not false. Look at them, at their faces. Is this how he dead look? They have become inert and unconscious under the influence of the magic weapons."

Gradually the charm of the Nagapasa weakened and Rama, being the more powerful that Lakshmana, first opened his eyes. Seeing Lakshmana prostrate beside him he broke down and uttered piteous cries. Rama's lamentations made the Vanaras weep. Meanwhile, Vibhishana came there and Vanaras taking him to be Indrajit fled in fear. Then Jambuvana assuringly called them back.

While Sugriva, Vibhishana, Jambuvana and Sushena spoke consoling words to one another and discussed future course of action, the sky was overcast with clouds, and there was a storm accompanied by thunder and flashes of lightning. And then the great bird Garuda burst into sight. Seeing Garuda, the serpents, which had turned into arrows by the magic of Indrajit and had bound both the princes, ran away in fear. garuda softly stroked Rama and Lakshmana and restored their former loveliness and strength. The bruises and wounds were healed instantly at Garuda's touch and they rose up more resplendent then ever before. Rama and Garuda embraced each other lovingly, and then the great bird taking leave of Rama flew away. There was great rejoicing and jubilation in Rama's camp and it sent a chill down Ravana's spine. Thereupon, Ravana sent Dhumraksha with a big army to slay Rama.

The heroic Dhumraksha found the Vaner sena like an agitated ocean. Both the armies clashed and on either side numerous warriors fell dead on the field. Gradually the conflict grew more grim and fierce and Dhumraksha commenced butchering Vanaras. Seeing this rout, Hanuman advanced with a huge rock and smashed Dhumraksha's chariot and then with a large stone broke his head in rage.

Then came Akampana, leading a big army of Rakshashas and demons. A terrible conflict raged. Akampana smote Vanaras with his deadly arrows and they took to their heels, but then Hanuman grew into a formidable stature and uprooting a huge tree struck the

Rakshasha dead. Most of the demons were slain and the survivors fled in panic to convey the grim news of Akampana's death.

The news of Akampana's death made Ravana cast a sorrowful glance at his ministers but soon he took heart and went round the city's defences, and then had discussions with his commander-in-chief Prahasta. Prahasta got ready and his warriors got upon their chariots, elephants and horses and stood around their General. Prahasta rode a golden chariot accompanied by his formidable troops. Seeing him coming forward, the Vanaras uprooted trees and plucked huge stones and attacked the enemy. Prahasta's fierce attack sent Vanaras reeling. Then Neela rushed forward in wrath and struck Prahasta with a tall tree and Prahasta pierced it with sharp arrows. Neela then destroyed Prahasta's chariot and horses. Prahasta jumped down his chariot and a great duel followed. Finally Neela killed Prahasta with a huge stone and the *Rakshashas* fled to Lanka, leaderless, in panic. Victorious Neela went to Rama and Rama praised him again and again.

Kumbhakarna is Awakened

General Prahasta's death stunned Ravana and then he himself came to fight riding a beautiful chariot and surrounded by grim- visaged demons. He saw the Vanar sena, vast like the ocean, waiting for the fight. Rama looking at the resplendent Ravana said, 'Today I have the opportunity to wreak vengeance upon Ravana for kidnapping Sita."

Thereupon a grim battle ensued.

Ravana then with a deadly arrow struck Sugriva and he fell unconscious on the ground. Ravana killed many of the huge Vanaras and the monkeys ran for shelter to Rama. To restrain Ravana from spreading further havoc, Hanuman rushed forward, and heroic Lakshmana too came forth. Ravana, engaging Hanuman in a duel, dealt him a severe slap Hanuman reeled under its impact, but then recovering replied with such a mighty counter-slap that Ravana trembled like a hill in earthquake. It delighted Vanaras exceedingly and they shouted with joy. Ravana grew furious and struck Hanuman on chest with a powerful fist, making Hanumana

faint.

Leaving Hanuman there, he then engaged Neela in fight, and struck him with arrow. Neela suddenly diminished his size and perched himself on Ravana's flag staff to his great discomfiture and Vanaras delight. Then Ravana in anger smote him with a deadly weapon and he fell flat on the ground but somehow survived.

Then there began a fight between Ravana and Lakshmana. Ravana used a dealy weapon to strike Lakshmana on the forehead and the later fell unconscious on the field. Having recovered himself, Lakshmana then pierced Ravana with his sharp arrows. Now, Ravana used formidable *Shakti* against Lakshmana and Lakshmana fainted. Ravana seized unconscious Lakshmana but could not raise him even an inch from the ground. Hanuman then dealt a powerful fist blow and Ravana reeled and fell unconscious from it for some time.

Rama then twanged his mighty bow, got upon Hanuman's back and challenged Ravana. Ravana struck Hanuman with arrows and Rama destroyed Ravana's chariot, horses and all. Rama look pity on exhausted and chariotless Ravana, and asked him to withdraw from the battle and to come next day refreshed. And humbled Ravana entered Lanka.

The ten-headed Ravana sat sad and humbled on his golden throne, surrounded by his ministers. Then he said, "O *Rakshashas*! Go, and awake giant Kumbhakarna, my younger brother. He has been sleeping for six months. Roused from deep sleep, he will destroy Rama, Lakshamana and Vanaras."

The heroic Kumbhakarna, under a curse, slept for six months after every day he kept awake. The demons with carts loaded with breakfast containing various kinds of steaming meat, viands and vats of wine went to awaken him. He lay stretched in a large hall like a mountain. The demons had difficulty in advancing to him owing to the force of his respiration. He did not stir and looked very dreadlful. Sukha entered the hall fighting the push and pull of the giant's stormy respiration. He was followed by other *Rakshashas* thousands in number. He could be roused with great

efforts.

Kumbhakarna awoke yawing and spread his python like mighty arms. He stood up and started devouring heaps of meat and viands and drank big quantity of wine and blood. Having somewhat satisfied his hunger and thrst, Kumbhakarna asked, "Why have you disturbed my sleep? is not everything well in Lanka? What calamity has be fallen?" Then Yupaksha, a leader of the Rakshashas, with joined palms said, "O prince, we have been defeated. General Prahasta has been slain. Lanka has been besieged by Rama and his troops.

"Rama? What Rama? Never mind, now I am awake," said he.

"Rama is a prince and monkeys and bears are his warriors. Ravana himself went to fight but retired humbled."

This made Kumbhakarna mightly furious and he decided to kill Rama and Lakshamana first before meeting his brother Ravana, but at Mahodara's sdvice he agreed to meet Ravana first. He then washed his face, drank several pots of wine and went to Ravana. As he walked, the earth shook under his feet. Ravana greeted and embraced Kumbhakarna and then said how Rama had surrounded Lanka with his army affter constructing a bridge across the sea and how so many brave *Rakshashas* had been killed. Ravana asked his brother's help in that hour of great crisis. He wanted to kill Rama and Lakshmana in the battle.

Hearing these words of full entreaty, Kumbhakarna said, "O king!! The warning we gave you earlier has not been heeded. You rejected the good counsel out of your lust and thoughtlessness. You abducted Sita. Now what else do you expect? Better if you had slain Rama before doing so. Vibhishana was right when he tried to stop you and you wrongfully drove him out of Lanka. You have begun from the wrong end. It is this wrong order which is at the root of present crisis."

These words certainly made Ravana feel bad but controlling his anger he said, "Past is past. What has been done is done. Now it is useless to go into its discussion. Think of the present and do your best. In my distress and present sorrows, however brought about by

my wrong policies, it is your duty to stand by me firm and loyal. I need your strength and help and not this lecturing."

Kumbhakarna was so moved by these words of his brother that he promptly replied, "Brother! Never mind and do as you please. Think Rama and Lakshmana slain and Vanaras destroyed. Banish sorrow from your thoughts. Rama must slay me to get at you. I shall smother the enemy even with my bare arms. I need no arms. I shall consume them all in the fire of my anger. Drown your anxiety in wine and in women so beautiful."

Ravana felt very happy. He was all smiles. He blessed Kumbhakarna who donned his armour and helmet and wheeled round his brother. Then he appeared on the battlefield like death itself. He saw Vanaras, Rama and Lakshmana and yelled a war-cry so loud and shuddering that the Vanaras felt it through the ground under their feet too. This panicked the Vanaras, they broke the line and either ran helter-skelter or fell down unconscious. Angada tried to rally the fleeing monkeys but without success. They ran past him crying, "Life is dear to us."

Kumbhakarna strode forward with a deafening roar and killed several Vanaras. The Hanuman came jumping and challenged him hurling huge rocks and trees on him. In return, he stunned Hanuman by piercing his breast with a deadly lance. He smote many other Vanara chiefs and blood flowed in strems. Then Angada rushed forward and hurled a big rock on his head. It enraged Kumbhakarna and he pounced upon Angada and sent Vanaras fleeing. In the duel, Kumbhakarna dealt a severe blow and Angada fell senseless.

Now Sugriva tried to stop him, but he too failed and was captured by his adversary. It was with great difficulty that Sugriva could writhe himself free of Kumbhakarna's clutches.

Lakshmana challenged him with a shower of sharp arrows, but Kumbhakarna rushed at Rama past Lakshmana. Seeing the death-like Kumbhakarna approching, Rama resounded the four quarters with the twang of his bow and shot sharp arrows at him, but wighout any harm to Kumbhakarna, who in great anger

whirling his formidable club smashed several Vanaras. Rama the tore off Kumbhakarna's hand, which held the club, with a deadly arrow. Meanwhile, uprooting a tall tree with his only hand, Kumbhakarna rushed at Rama and Rama severed that hand too, with another sharp weapon. With a terrible yell, the demon pounced upon Rama but Rama cut-off both his legs with a sharp weapon. Then Kumbhakarna opened his cave like mouth and rushed on his stumps to devour Rama, and Rama filled his cavity of mouth with arrows. His throat was choked and he lost his speech. Then with a flamming arrow, Rama cut off his head. The huge head, carried by the force of the arrow, rose high in the air and falling into the sea sank to the bottom.

When Ravana heard the sad news of Kumbhakarna's death he felt as if his own life has left him and he fainted. After regaining consciousness, he continued lamenting with grief-laden heart and again fell in a swoon. When he came to his sense he cried, "O hero! How could you be slain by Rama? Now, that I care for the empire or for Sita? If I cannot avenge you upon Rama, then surely death is my fortune. Alas, how shall I conquer the enemy without you. Ah, why did I fail to listen to wise Vibhishana?"

The Conqueror of Indra is Slain

Ravana wept hot tears and lamented for his dead brother and sons with his head hung down. He found the groans and wailings of *Rakshaska* women too much for him. A terrific rage swelled within his broad breast and he felt choked in all his ten throats. Then seeing his father so drowned in grief, Indrajit said, "Oh father! Why are you sad and downcast? So long live, you need not be unhappy. I shall destroy Rama and Lakshmana with deadly arrows."

Comforting Ravana, the heroic Indrajit got upon a fast and beautiful chariot. Surrounded by a large number of tried and trusted warriors, he issued forth for battle. On reaching out the walls of Lanka, he commenced a victory sacrifice. He lighted the smokeless sacrificial fire on an altar. He poured purified butter in the flames and made other offerings besides that of a black goat. The smokeless golden flames leapt up in splendour and then the god of

fire himself appeared to accept the offerings. Indrajit received Brahma-weapons and charmed bow and arrows. He chanted mantras and invoked Brahma by casting offerings into the sacrificial fire.

Then he vanished in the sky upon his chariot armed with all the celestial weapons and a fierce battle commenced. Encourged by invisible Indrajit, the *Rakshashas* began to cause havoc in the Vanar sena. Vanaras hurled rocks and trees on *Rakshashas*. Indrajit then struck such terror that monkeys and bears fled in fear and were badly routed Indrajit with his flaming snake-like shafts struck Nala, Sugriva and Angada. They fell unconscious on the ground. He wounded Hanuman and Jambuvana with his lethal weapons and then smothered Rama and Lakshmana with his Brahmastra. All the while he remained invisible. Thus victorious, he returned to Lanka.

The battlefield wore the look of a huge slaughter-house. Dead monkeys, apes, bears, *Rakshashas* and severed limbs lay scattered. Somehow Hanuman got to his feet and came to Jambuvana. Hanuman helped the latter to stand up and then there came Vibhishana rallying the Vanaras with his words of hope and encouragement. Jambuvana then said to Hanuman, "My son! This is not the time to lament. Go instantly across the sea to Himalaya mountains. Between Kailas and Rishabha peaks stands the hill of life-herbs. Those herbs are potent enough to heal any wound and to restore life of dead. Fetch them quickly so that Rama and Lakshmana may be revived. Their wounds will be healed and they will fight again tomorrow. Be quick. Only you are capable of achieving this feat.

Like a comet, he flew straight over the sea and the land to the Medicine Hill, and there he saw many shining medicinal plants, but finding it difficult to identify the particular plants of the medicine, he uprooted the whole peak and returned fast holding it over his head in his hand. As soon as Hanuman arrived, the very fragrance of those herbs healed the wounds and restored life to the dead. Rama, Lakshmana and Vanaras got to their feet, strong, healthy and ready to fight. Rama embraced Hanuman with his eyes wet with joy.

Sugriva and Hanuman, in consultation with each other, decided the course of action. They attacked the city at midnight with some chosen monkeys, apes and bears and set Lanka on fire. Before the eyes of *Rakshashas* the fire was ablaze and thousands of mansions, towers, turrets and palaces were reduced to ashes. The burning Lanka kindled Ravana's wrath and he sent Kumbha, Nikumbha and Yupaksha along with other Rakshashas to fight Rama. In the terrible conflict that ensued, Sugriva killed Kumbha and Hanuman slew Nikumbha. Many more demon warriors fell dead to flaming arrows of the Vanar sena. The death of Kumbha, Nikumbha and Makraksha falared Ravana's wrath anew and he said to Meghnad, "My son! Fight again for me. Slay Rama and Lakshmana by your deadly weapons. Your prowess is matchless. You have defeated even Indra, the king of gods."

"Yes, I will," replied Indrajit and Ravana embraced his darling son and smelled his hair.

Indrajit issued forth Lanka in great splendour and flew before Rama's Vanar sena. He created a life-like magic figure of Sita and before Vanaras cut her two with his sword. Deluded, deceived, stunned and horrified they cried weeping, "What good it is now to fight? That ends everything." When Vibhishana came to know of it he said, "Don't be deluded by an illusion. Take my word, it is all false. This is only a trick of wizard Indrajit. He wants to get time by this magic trick so that he may perform a sacrifice. Let Lakshmana and others hurry to his place of sacrifice to obstruct it."

Lakshmana accompanied by Hanuman, Vibhishana and other warriors reached the place where Indrajit was offering oblations to a flame, burning bright on an altar. Indrajit was about to make the final offering in the sacrificial fire when it was interrupted by a shot from Lakshman's bow and then ensued a terrible battle. Indrajit got upon his chariot, shot a thousand arrows. Lakshmana, standing on Hanuman's broad shoulders, cut them down to pieces. Both Lakshmana and Indrajit were well-matched in their skill, strength and swiftness. The battle continued for quite a long time. The arrows covered the sky and made it darker. Lakshmana then took a deadly arrow, put it on the bow string and pulled it back to his ear

and shot. Instantly, it severed Indrajit's head, which fell lifeless on the ground with a loud thud and a flash. Apes and bears rejoiced exceedingly and fell in each other's arms. Gods and Gandharvas appeared in the sky, showered flowers shouting with joy.

As the news of Indrajit's death reached Ravana, he shed burning tears in such profusion that they seared the ground where they fell. From his mouth issued burning words, "Alas my son! What! Gone for ever! O conqueror of Indra and gods! Have you been vanquished by death! O son, it does not belove you to leave me disconsolate and downcast like this. Without you what remains, but emptiness. The old should precede the young. Why, Oh why, I am left behind to mourn and make your funeral."

"It is best to slay Sita," he said aloud to himself. "She is the root of all the conflict. My son killed the false Sita, a creation of magic. I shall kill the real one." With these words, he rushed towards Ashoka Grove, with a sword in his hand. But then one of his ministers saw it and was horrified. He blocked his way trembling and appealed to his reason with folded hands. He appealed to him to desist from killing a woman in captivity and reminded of its accompanying sin. He said, "Slay Rama, direct your wrath at him. Tomorrow is the new moon, and the night and darkest. Fight and kill Rama." Then Ravana saw the reason, collected himself and seathed his flaming sword.

The End of Ravana

Almost mad with anger at his son Indrajit's death, Ravana sent forth a vast army to destory Rama and Lakshmana. The *Rakshashas* struck the Vanaras with lethal weapons and they in reply hurled rocks, stones and huge trees on demons. Rama with lightning swiftness smothered the enemy host. Demons in thick numbers lay dead and the survivors thus routed fled in terror to Lanka.

The *Rakshasha* women in Lanka lamented piteously being deprived of their husbands, sons and brothers. Their loud cries of woe rent the sky and made Ravana exceedingly sad and worried. In anger, he gnashed his twenty sets of teeth and bit as many lips.

Heaving long, deep sighs he ordered his army to be ready to march for the battle. He donned his matchless protective armour and gold crown and buckles his sword belt tight.

Once again huge and dark warriors like hills and clouds, strong, cruel, loyal, tried and tested thronged the streets and market places of Lanka. They came on foot, rode upon elephants, horses, chariots and camels, armed with various flaming weapons. When they marched the earth shook under their heavy tread. Once again the battlemented high gates threw open and the draw bridges dropped with a deafening noise across the wide and deep moat surrounding the city.

Ravana set forth mounted on celestial chariot drawn by beautiful eight horses and filled with all kinds of deadly weapons. A large army on chariots, elephants, horses and on foot accompanied him. As he pressed forward, many ill-omens were observed, but he hardly cared for them. Mahodara, Virupaksha and other generals advanced swiftly at their lord's command. Both he sides excited exceedingly clashed. Ravana continued pressing forward, battering the Vanara line and smothered apes and bears with his sharp hurning arrows. They fled in fear, chased by ferocious Ravana, Sugriva, hampering Ravana's further advances, hurled huge stones and boulders at him. Warriors on both sides were killed in large number. The death of Virupaksha at Sugriva's hands grealty enraged Ravana and he asked his charioteer to drive him where Rama-Lakshmana were.

Ravana found Rama standing ready for the battle. Rama twanged his mighty bow again and again. In the meantime, Lakshmana showered arrows on Ravana. Ravana cut down those arrows and then past Lakshmana came to Rama. The sky was overcast with their arrows and it grew dark even at noon. They struck each other with sharp weapons on forehead, breast, heart and shoulders. They uttered *mantras* and discharged various sharp arrows of secret power desirous of each other's destruction. Rama pierced Ravana with many sharp arrows, yet he did not yield. Then Lakshmana and Vibhishana together challenged Ravana and Ravana seeing his brother got exceedingly enraged and hurled a formidable Sakti

weapon, but was intercepted by a shaft from Lakshmana. Seeing Vibhishana's life in danger. Lakshmana gave him cover and shot mighty arrows on Ravana. Then Ravana flung a flaming Sakti at Lakshmana. It come like a shooting meteor and pierced Lakshmana's breast violently and he fell on the ground unconscious.

Rama overwhelmed with grief made up his mind to destroy Ravana at once. First he plucked out that Sakti, which and pierced Lakshmana through his breast, and then smothered Ravana with sharp arrows but Ravana made his escape good. Rama, seeing Lakshmana writhing and rolling on the ground with pain. was filled with sorrow and burst forth in lamentations. Then Sushena the physician of Ravana, brought from Lanka on Vibhishan's advice said to Hanuman, "O hero, go once again to that Hill of Life Medicines in the Himalayas and fetch the medicinal plants quickly to save Lakshmana."

Hanuman flew across the sea and over the plains and forests to the Himalayas and then to that particular hill. But failing to identify those medicinal plants, he uprooted the whole peak, placed it on his palm and flew back fast to Sushena. Sushena plucked and crushed the herbs and placed them before Lakshmana's nostrils. No sooner did Lakshmana inhale that he got to his feet cured of all aches and pains and then the ten directions resounded with hurrahing of Vanara host.

Meanwhile, Ravana got upon another resplendent car and rushed back to fight. Then suddenly a celestial chariot drawn by ten white horses landed near Rama from the sky. The charioteer came down from his driving box and said to Rama with joined hands, "I am Matali, the celestial charioteer of Indra, and this is Indra's car. The king of gods has sent me down with this chariot, this armour and these weapons for your victory. Here I am at your service. Get on the car."

Rama went round the chariot and got upon it and said, "Drive it straight before Ravana." In no time Rama and Ravana stood facing each other. These warriors of supreme strength and skill discharged various powerful and explosive weapons and arrows on each other.

Ravana shot the cobra weapon and Rama intercepted it with the Garuda weapon. Ravana then enraged pierced Matali with arrows and cut down the golden flag staff. Being struck with arrows, Rama was filled with wrath. His eyes grew red hot, and his visage dreadful and the whole creation trembled in terror. With an incantation Ravana then hurled a terrible Sula at Rama and Rama in reply hurled the Sakti. The comet-like Sakti, clashed with the blazing Sula and the latter broke down into pieces. Rama pierced Ravana and his steeds with arrows. Ravana then wounded Rama with his sharp shafts. But Rama recovered soon and struck Ravana with renewed energy. Seeing Ravana exhausted and spent, his charioteer hurried him away from the fields.

Regaining consciousness, Ravana returned to the battle and the grim fight began again and weapons clashed anew. The formidable duel between Rama and Ravana, the foremost of warriors, was so amazing that, rest of the warriors stood watching the grim struggle, with weapons in their hands, They forgot to attack one another and looked in wonder at Rama and Ravana displaying their best skills and prowess. The duel grew fiercer and more desperate by degrees and then Rama cut down Ravana's ten heads with a terrible arrow, and the lifeless heads rolled down upon the earth bleeding. But the heads grew again. Rama again promptly cut them off and they again sprang up immediately. Thus hundreds of heads rolled down but they were again there and Ravana never turned his back. The struggle continued unabated day and night. They duelled with arrows and weapons for a very long time. But Rama was intrigued to see heads of Ravana spring up again and again. Then Matali, the charioteer, reminded Rama, "Ravana's end is near, delay not. Now is the time to discharge Brahmastra."

Rama took up and invoked the effulgent Brahmastra, which was given to Rama by sage Agastya. Rama uttered a mantra, fixed the Brahma-weapon his bow string, pulled it back to his ear, held his breath for a moment and shot. The Brahmastra hitting Ravana's heart pierced through it, killing him then and there, but it did not stop, came out of his back and dived into the earth. The bow and arrow Ravana held in his hands to ward it, slipped down and he rolled down his car with a loud crash.

The survivors of Ravana's army fled for their lives behind the high golden wall of Lanka and hid there. Vanaras rent the sky with their shouts of joy and hurrahing, "Victory to Rama!" Gods and Gandharvas sang Rama's praise. They showered flowers on Rama and played soft sweet music.

When the heat and jubliation of victory had somewhat subsided, and Vibhishana saw his heroic brother's dead body lying on dust mutilated, he burst forth in lamentations. He recalled his virtues, victories, wisdom and learning. Seeing Vibhishana thus lamenting, Rama consoed him, "Ravana was a great warrior, he fell fighting and thus he attained Heaven. It required no lamentation. Perform his funeral rites.

Afterwards came Mandodari surrounded by lesser queens. Being overwhelmed with grief they all fell upon him like uprooted creepers. Their piteous and loud lamentations filled everybody's hear with sorrow.

After Ravana's funeral, Vibhishana was duly crowned by Lakshmana and others with Rama's permission. This new king of Lanka then came to Rama and bowed low before him in deep reverence.

The Fire Ordeal

Being ordered by Rama, Hanuman, after seeking Vibhishana's permission, flew to Ashoka Grove to see Sita. There sat Sita alone under the golden Sinsipa tree. Greeting Sita with joined hands above his head, Hanuman said, "O worshipful mother! Rama is anxious to know about your well-being. Rama and Lakshmana are well. Ravana has been slain by Rama with the help of Vanaras and their king Sugriva. By your grace we have won." But Sita remained silent lost in thoughts and Hanuman said, "Why? Why do you not speak to your son?"

"The joy of Rama's victory has made me mute. I do not find words to express myself. My son, how indebted I am to you! I have nothing worthwhile to reward you suitably. My child, your prowess is matchless. None in the world can equal you ever!

Go, tell Rama, my husband, I want to see him at the earliest."

hanuman bowed low and said with his voice wet with tears, "Yes mother, I shall convey your message. Rama is waiting my return." Then he leapt in the air and flew back fast like a dart to his master Rama.

Rama sent Vibhishana, the new king of Lanka, to fetch Sita. Thereupon Vibhishana went to Ashoka Grove preceded by his wife and said with joined palms, "O worshipful lady! Rama has sent me to fetch you. Your husband wants to see you. Get upon the car having decorated your person with new apparel, jewel and ornaments."

Sita immediately got up and with the help of *Rakshashis* took bath, changed her clothes, wore jewels and ornaments and proceeded in a palanquin.

Sita arrived but Rama did not take notice and remained adsorbed in his thoughts. Vibhishana then approached Rama and announced Sita's arrival. Rama startled and woke up form his contemplation. His heart was overwhelmed with past memories, grief, anguish and rapture. Sita's palanquin advanced towards Rama through the vast concourse of Vanaras and bears, and monkey-chiefs pushed them aside to clear a way. It created a commotion and confusion and a great noise arose. It aroused Rama's anger and he exclaimed, "Why do you disturb and put to inconvenience the Vanaras for a woman? There is nothing wrong in Vanaras seeing her in my presence." These words of Rama pained the Vanara chiefs and Vibhishana and they grew apprehensive of something ominous. Sita got down from her palanquin and came towards Rama shrunk and hiding herself in shame. Sita stood in full view of a vast concourse of public resigned to her fate.

Rama then said, "O lady! I have avenged upon Ravana and fulfilled my promise. I have freed you and my efforts have been crowned with success. Know it that all my effort has been to maintain the honour of my great Solar Race, and not for any personal satisfaction. Now, it is not our family tradition to take a woman back as a wife who has lived all alone in another's house.

You cannot live with me and hence you are free to choose any of these heroes. My object of freeing you has been fully achieved."

These words of accusation before the vast public stuned Sita with grief. She felt the utter futility of her existence and wanted to wipe it out. At these unheard of allegations, she broke down and wept bitter hot tears. Then in sobs she addressed Rama, "Why do you speak like an uncultured low man? Why do you accuse me like this? I am not what you think me to be. How am I to blame if Ravana abducted me or touched me while I was unconscious? Your anger has overcome your discrimination. I am Janaki, the daughter of Janaka, a great seer and king. The earth is my mother. You have failed to understand me and my nature. Since it is so, only one course is left to me." With these words, she again broke into a flood of tears and then turning to Lakshmana said, "Lakshmana! Prepare my funeral pyre. I have been falely accused and renounced by Rama in public. Now, I shall put an end to my life.

Lakshmana agitated and enraged but helpless looked at Rama, expecting that Rama would say 'No' to it but Rama did not relent. Lakshmana gathered faggots and made a big fire. Sita with her eyes bent wheeled round her hushand, prostrated before the fire and said, "O god of fire, you are witness to my purity. If I am chaste let Agni protect me." With these words, she fearlessly entered the leaping flames. The women raised a piteous cry. Vanaras, bears and others were stunned. And from the heart of the flames rose Yama, Brahma, Mahadeva, Agni and other gods and testified to Sita's purity and devotion to Rama. Agni, the great fire-god appeared carrying Janaki on his lap and presented her to Rama saying, "Sita is pure and chaste. I dwell within ever life. I am the witness every present and in everything. Sita is innocent beyond any reproach. Take back your wife, Narayana."

With these words, the fire-god placed Sita's hand in Rama's and Rama pleased said, "O Agni! Purification was a must for public good. I know she is pure and chaste. She was untouchable to Ravana like a pure flame. She is inseparable from me as light is from the sun." If pleased all the gods, Vanaras, bears and Rakshashas. Night was about to set in and the gods disappeared in

the thin air. Rama ordered everybody to retire for rest and then he himself repaired to the cottage with Sita. The cottage was built by Lakshmana specially for their rest.

Return to Ayodhya

On the following morning, Rama got up from his bed of leaves and grass in a very happy frame of mind. Rama with Sita and Lakshmana and others ascended that wonderful and grand aerial chariot Pushpak. Pushpak could carry any number of persons any where they wished. Rama rode with Janaki, Vibhishana, his four ministers and a horde of Vanaras bears.

As they flew to Ayodhya, Rama pointing out below said to Sita, "Look there my love, Lanka perched on Trikuta, which looks like Kailas mountain. Look! that is the field where we fought and won you back. See, there appears Kishkindha, the beautiful city of Sugriva. There Vali was slain by me." At Kishkindha the Vimana stopped at Sita's wish, for she wanted to take Tara and Sugriva's consort and other Vanara women with her to Ayodhya.

As the Vimana approached Rishyamooka mountain, Rama pointed out to Sita, "Look, there is lovely lake Pampa. Here I met Hanuman and Sugriva. See there I wept in your separation while searching you. See there still stands the beautiful cottage built by Lakshmana. There flows the Godavari. Now we are over the Vindhya Ranges and Agastya's hermitage. There is Chitrakuta. There flows the Yamuna." The Vimana landed at the confluence of the white Ganga and the dark Yamuna, where Rishi Bhardwaja dwelt. Rama met the rishi and enquired about Bharata and other's well-being in Ayodhya. Bhardwaja returned, "Rama, I know all you have gone through. I know it through my yogic powers. Bharata and everybody is fine there in Ayodhya but send the message of your coming to Bharata."

Rama sent Hanuman to Ayodhya with the good news of his victorious return. He said, "Hanuman, go immediately to Bharata and tell him everything in detail. Ascertain his state of mind from his talk and gestures. If you find Bharata wanting to keep Ayodhya as his own, let him have it."

Hanuman flew to Nandigram and saw Bharata sitting in an ascetic's garb beside the throne whereupon Rama's sandals were placed. Shatrughna sat nearby on a mat. Hanuman got down from the skyand saluted first to Rama's sandals and then Bharata. Bharata was exceedingly glad to receive Hanuman and to know about Rama's safe return. People caome in twos and threes and surrounded Hanuman. Hanuman was given a nice treat. Royal food, fruits and nuts were offered, and then Bharata requested Hanuman to narrate in detail what had happened during the long years of absence to Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. Beside Bharata sat Shatrughna in a circle and then the ancient charioteer Sumantra and others, devouring every word that dropped from Hanuman's mouth, and they all felt exceedigly pleased and satisfied.

Word was sent to Ayodhya and the city awoke to a new life full of gay abundance to receive her master Rama back home. Sweet music was being played, people in their best apparels thronged the city gates, bards recited Rama's praise and Brahmins chanted Vedic hymns. The streets and markets were cleaned and sprinkled with scented water, fried paddy and flowers were strewn. Ayodhya, once agin, after fourteen dreary summers and winters, become the city of dreams. Banners and flags of coloured silk streamed high in the sky.

Pious Bharata, Shatrughna and Hanuman, followed by the Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra in chariots, went outside the city. Bharata was on foot carrying Rama's sandals on his head, beneath a white umbrella of fine silk. Out through the battlemented gates, horses, elephants and chariots and vast concourse of humanity shouting with joy began to converge outside the city beyond Nandigram. All the quarters resounded with rattling of elephants, rumbling of chariots and the shrill sound of trumpets and conches.

Then in distance on the horizon above tall trees appeared the Pushpak Vimana, resplendent like the full moon, and then a joyous tumult rose rending the sky, "Look, look, there is Rama and Sita and Lakshmana." People got down from their mounts and looked at Rama with a sense of great satisfaction and delight. Bharata, beside himself with joy, prostrated before, Rama and then,

kneeling, slipped the sandals on Rama's feet. Rama embraced Bharata and Shatrughna with joy. Then Bharata welcomed Sita, bowing low with joined palms and embraced Lakshmana, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Jambuvana, Angada and others. Talking to Sugriva, Bharata said, "O dearest friend! We were four brothers but we are now five and you are one of us." Addressing Vibhishana he said, "How nice of you! You helped Rama in achieving his mission."

Rama then met Kausalya and Kaikeyi and Sumitra. Rama then worshipped the feet of Rishi Vasistha and enquired about his welfare. Being directed by Rama, the Pushpak Vimana proceeded in the north towards Alka where Kubera dwelt.

It was a happy reunion. At last the four brothers were walking together through the markets and streets of Ayodhya after fourteen years of exile. After fourteen years the coronation festivities again commenced at full pace. After fourteen years, the first festival of Ayodhya thus began, the best people had ever seen and enjoyed. People from the country-side poured into the city to enjoy the festivity to their hearts content. They danced, sang, whistled tunes and feasted.

The Coronation

With Rama's happy return to Ayodhya, the time of trial, and tribulations had come to an end. The night faded into a bright morning, and Rama emerged from his palace wearing rich and beautiful apparel, garlands and ornaments. Shatrughna himself had dressed Rama with loving care. Sita was adorned with heavenly appared, rich jewels and ornaments by the three queens for the occasion.

Then Rama drove through the streets and markets of Ayodhya. Bharata sat on the drive's box, Shatrughna held the royal umbrella over Rama's head. Lakshmana and Vibhishana stood on either side of Rama fanning him with snowwhite chowries, Sugriva and other Vanaras in human form followed Rama on elephants and horses. The public greeted Rama with folded hands and prayed for his victory, and Rama responded with his winning smile or a kind word. A tumultuous noise accompanied the procession all the way,

people shouting, "Glory to Rama!" The gods and Gandharvas in their joy showered flowers and played sweet music.

In the meantime, all the articles required for the coronation ceremony were obtained. The water of the our seas and the rivers required for the investiture was collected in jewelled golden jars. Rishi Vasistha and other Brahmins made Rama and Sita sit upon a jewelled throne. Then they anointed Rama with the sacred water of the rivers, seas and other auspicious liquids. Vasistha put on Rama's head the resplendent crown, with which Rama's illustrious predecessor had been crowned earlier in succession. The magnificence of the ceremony and the delight the people beggar description.

Rama gave to the Brahmins millions of cows with their horns plated with gold and silver and also rich apparels and costly ornaments. Rama offered a jewelled necklace to Sugriva. To Janaki Rama offered a beautiful pearl necklace. As soon as Rama placed it round Sita's neck, Sita looked at Rama and took it out and with Rama's approval gave it to Hanuman. Hanuman knelt before Sita and she put it around his neck with a smile. It was in recognition to Hanuman's matchless prowess, intelligence, high sense of service and devotion. Hanuman with this ornament looked like a hill encircled by white fluffy clouds. Rama called for more jewels, apparels of honour and rich ornaments and offered them to Vanara chiefs, Jambuvana and Vibhishana. Gratified, they all returned to their respecitve places taking leave of Rama.

Rama ruled for a very long period and performed many sacrifices, several times. Under Rama's auspices all the world was full of joy. People enjoyed perfect happiness, without any fear, sorrow and disease. In his realm, no woman became a widow nor the aged had to make funeral for the young. People enjoyed a long, prosperous, healthy and pious life. No one told a lie or even dreamt of a sin. There was sufficient rain and the land rich and fertile.

Sunil Sehgal is a seasoned researcher in Hinduism. He did his M.A. in History. He became Sadhu for a decade and visited many temples, and holy places throughout India and during this period he compiled this encyclopaedia. At present he is living in Kangra and serving the poor.

ISBN : 81-7625-064-3

Jacket Design — Tarun Rawat

Sarup and Sons
PUBLISHERS
4740/23,ANSARI ROAD, DARYA GANJ, NEW DELHI - 110 002